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Doctor Carver, the Champion Shot.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.



THE INDIANS WERE AS SILENT AS DEATH. MINNE WAS CALM AND SMILING.

Doctor Carver, THE CHAMPION SHOT;

OR,

The "Evil Spirit" of the Plains.

The Romantic and Adventurous Career of Doctor William Frank Carver, Whose Life as a Plainsman, Horseman, Rifle King, Pistol Prince, and Hunter, Has Won for Him a Name Known the Country Over.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES OF BUFFALO BILL,"
"WILD BILL," "TEXAS JACK," "WHITE BEAVER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. THE BOY CAPTIVE.

KIND reader, it is a pleasant task to write of one who has risen above the mass of mankind by some deed of daring, some gift of genius, that has sent his name to be heralded to the four parts of the world.

Such a task is now mine, in writing of the thrilling adventures and noted deeds of a man known to civilization as Doctor W. F. Carver, the Champion Shot of the World, and upon the border as the Evil Spirit of the Plains, a cognomen given him by the Indians, on account of his wonderful deeds of prowess and miraculous escapes from death.

Born at Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1840, Frank Carver, as he was called when a boy, was not destined to live the quiet life of a country lad; but to have his "baptism of fire" upon the Western plains amid cruel savages, for his father migrated to Minnesota, settling near St. Anthony's Falls, where now stands the populous city of Minneapolis.

When but a boy of eight, Frank was destined to be an actor in a scene that has ever haunted his memory, go where he may, win what fame he might, for it was indelibly stamped upon his heart and brain.

The father of the family had been called away from home on business, and said to his little son:

"Frank, take care of your mother and sister while I am gone, for remember you are a border boy now."

Frank promised that he would do his best, and taking his little rifle, he went out to kill some game for his mother, hoping in his boyish heart to some day get a chance to kill an Indian, for at that time the Crow-Sioux were very troublesome in that part of the country.

Alas! as he returned home with his small string of game, he little dreamed how soon he would be called upon to meet those savage foes of the border.

That very night, while all in the pleasant cabin home were slumbering, a band of Crow-Sioux stole quietly up to the door, and one who spoke English, knocked and asked for food and shelter.

Never did the Carvers turn from their door one making such an application, and Mrs. Carver called to one of the servants to let the stranger enter, when Frank came hastily down from the half-upper story where he slept, and said in a whisper:

"Mother, they are Indians, and plenty of them are outside the door."

This was startling intelligence, and Mrs. Carver hastened up-stairs, and gazed quickly out of the small window through which her little son had made the discovery, and against which his little bed stood.

Perhaps it was a premonition of her fate that caused her to sink down upon the bed and draw her boy toward her, while she said in trembling tones:

"Frank, my boy, we are lost."

"No, no, mother, for here is my rifle and I will protect you," said the brave lad, while another loud knock was heard, and the words:

"Open door! want something eat. Want sleep all night."

"Oh! now I know that that is an Indian's voice."

"What shall I do?" cried the poor woman.

"Tell Buck to order them off, mother."

Buck was an old and faithful servant, and he was ever ready to do whatsoever he was told.

But Indians were a terror to him, and he could not find voice to obey Mrs. Carver's commands, so she said sternly:

"I cannot give you shelter, for my house is full."

"Give something eat!" was the demand from without.

"No; it is late and we have nothing to give you."

"Come in and get it if don't."

Mrs. Carver was trembling with dread, and stood clutching to her heart her little girl, while Frank still remained up-stairs.

In the room where she sat were also Buck and a female servant, and all were in dismay.

"Go away, for I will not let you in," cried Mrs. Carver with all the sternness she could command.

"Me come in," was the reply, and instantly heavy blows began to fall upon the door.

But suddenly there rung out from up-stairs the sharp report of a rifle, and a piercing yell followed from outside, while there was heard the rapid scampering of feet.

"Mother, I killed him; he is lying on the steps."

"It was the one who was beating at the door," whispered Frank down the stairway.

"Oh, my poor boy! to think that your young hands must be stained with human blood," cried the poor mother.

But back came the plucky whisper:

"I'm going to stain 'em again, mother, for they are coming back."

They were indeed coming back, and in force.

too, for Frank, as he looked from the window, saw a double line of warriors running rapidly toward the house, and between them they carried a long and heavy piece of timber which his father had hewn out for the sill of a barn he was building.

Young as he was, Frank knew that the end must now come; but he was seized with a spirit of revenge, and aiming at the one in advance, that was holding a rope about the log, he pulled trigger.

The result was far greater than he had believed possible, and he was so startled that he cried out:

"Mother, I have killed them all."

But he had brought down the warrior he had aimed at, and falling quickly in front of the line, he had tripped up those who came after, and thus the weight of the log, with the falling over the bodies of those in advance, prostrated the entire party that were rushing so swiftly toward the cabin to batter in the door.

With wild yells of rage, the warriors again sprung to their feet, the log was once more raised, and they came forward with irresistible force.

The end of the heavy beam struck the stout door with a shock that shook the cabin, bursting it wide open and instantly there came rushing into the room the maddened savages.

Mrs. Carver had retreated to an inner room, carrying her little girl with her, and followed by her servants, while she cried loudly for Frank.

"I am coming, mother," answered the brave boy as he ran across the room just as the Indians dashed in, and was trying to reload his rifle as he went along.

"Oh, mother! I cannot drive this bullet home," he cried, as the piece of lead stopped half-way down the barrel.

But, had he done so, another shot might have cost him his life; but, as it was, a huge chief seized him and threw him one side, while, like red demons, the warriors sprung upon Mrs. Carver and killed her before the eyes of her children.

Then followed Frank's little sister and the servants, and Buck falling over in the corner of the room, bid with his dead body the horrified boy as he crouched there gazing upon the sickening scene.

Quickly the house was sacked, the scalps of the victims were placed at the belts of those who took them, and the savages set fire to the cabin.

Then Frank arose from beneath the dead weight upon him, and unmindful of the crackling flames, threw himself down by his mother's side.

But suddenly a strong hand seized him, and the chief who had thrown him over into the corner dragged him out of the burning house, and springing upon the back of his waiting horse, drew him up before him, while he said, in English:

"Good pale-face papoose; much brave.

"Red Wing take papoose to village."

Poor Frank heard his words, and the thought that his life was spared gave him no joy, for in that burning cabin, before his eyes, he knew were the forms of those he loved, and yelling

about him in their wild delight were the red demons who had made him their captive.

Having done their fiendish work well to their liking, the savages started off, loaded with plunder, and carrying in their midst little Frank, the Boy Captive, whose brain was wild, whose heart was throbbing with the memories of the scene through which he had passed, the scene that he was never to forget through life.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INDIAN'S GRATITUDE.

THE Indians carried little Frank, the only captive they had taken, the only pale-face whom they had spared in their fury during their cruel raid upon a score of homes, up to their village upon the Minnesota river.

Here Frank found that the Indian chief who spared him was the head of the tribe, and he was given to understand that he was to be the adopted son of this great man.

"White boy know Red Wing?" asked the chief, as he sat in his tepee resting the day of his arrival in the village.

Frank nodded.

"White boy remember what do for Red Wing?"

"Yes, and I remember what Red Wing has done, too," sadly said Frank, who now recognized the Indian as one he had once befriended.

It seems that Red Wing had trusted himself one day in the settlement, and instantly he had been seized by the settlers and thrown into the log jail.

They dared not kill him, but wished to hold him as a hostage, and, as no one in particular was jailer, the unfortunate red-skin fared badly, sometimes going two days without food.

This, with the confinement, broke down his health, and he became sick.

Frank had frequently seen the Indian in his prison, and felt pity for him, and Mr. Carver had remonstrated with his brother settlers for holding him, telling them that it would only serve to madden the tribe of the chief against them.

But they contended that as long as they held the chief as a hostage they would be free from attacks by his tribe.

Frank heard his father and mother talking of the shameful way in which the chief was treated, and going by the jail one day he slipped in through the logs some food, which the half-famished red-skin ate greedily.

This feeding of the Indian Frank kept up for some time, until the prisoner began to gain strength, and one day, discovering that the key of the jail had negligently been left in the door, the boy quietly unlocked it, cut with his small pocket-knife the bonds that held the chief, and said in a whisper:

"You had better run now."

But the poor fellow could not run, try as he might, after his long confinement, and hobbled painfully away into the bushes, while Frank went on his way, and not a soul did he tell his secret to, and who was the young traitor no one ever knew among the settlers.

It was a year after his release before Red Wing led his warriors against the settlement

where Frank dwelt, though he raided many other settlers' homes.

But at last his warriors demanded to be led against the settlers among whom Mr. Carver and his family lived, and the fearful result the reader already knows.

The chief had told his braves to spare the boy, and thus had Frank's life been saved through the fearful butchery around him, while he would rather have died with his mother and sister.

As he had never had a good look at Red Wing when in jail, and in his war-paint and good health he looked different, Frank had not recognized him until they reached the Indian village and he heard the name of the chief.

Saving the boy's life was Red Wing's gratitude, though he had killed those the poor lad held most dear.

"Pale-face boy my son," said the chief.

Frank shuddered when he glanced at the hideously-painted savage and remembered the noble, kindly face of his father.

"Son of great chief, Red Wing."

This was an honor which Frank cared not for, and he remained silent.

"Pale-face boy learn shoot bow and arrow, throw tomahawk, trail enemy, take scalp, hunt game."

"Be great chief."

Frank looked longingly at the chief's masses of hair, as though he would like to thin them out by taking a scalp or two from them, but he said nothing.

"What pale-face boy name?" asked Red Wing.

"Frank Carver."

This was Hebrew to the Indian, and he said:

"Red Wing give name; call *Wa se a-cha-su-el-la*."

"What is that?" asked Frank, to whom it was Greek; but he knew that the Indians had a meaning in their names, and wished to know what meant the jaw-breaking cognomen he had received.

"Lone-White-Boy," answered the chief, and so appropriate was the name that it brought tears to the poor boy's eyes.

"Make Indian of pale-face boy pr tty soon," said Red Wing, who prided himself upon his English, and was fond of hearing himself talk.

As a means of showing him how he intended to make an Indian out of him, Red Wing set him to work bringing wood for Mrs. Red Wing, who, having several red blossoms of her own, was determined to regard the little Lone-White-Boy with a jealous eye, and began to make her influence in the tepee circle felt by giving the boy a whack over the head for not bringing a larger armful of fagots, though he had brought as much as he could stagger under.

CHAPTER III.

FRANK'S HARD LUCK.

MONTHS passed away, and it seemed as though Red Wing's threat to make an Indian out of Frank was going to be realized, for Lone-White-Boy, as the red-skins called him, only in their own tongue, had learned to shoot a bow and arrow with a skill that amazed all in the village,

for he became so expert that he seldom missed.

Then he rode in a manner that won the envy of every red youngster in the tribe, and his adopted father had given him a pony that followed him about like a dog; in fact, Frank slept huddled up against the little mustang at night in preference to sleeping in the tepee, within the reach of the stick which Music Mouth, the chief's wife, was wont to carry to her couch of skins with her.

Then Frank had begun to look the worse for wear, for he was dressed as an Indian, his long golden hair was sunburnt and worn loose, and although he appeared cleanly, compared with the youngsters about him, he was by no means a model of neatness.

Frank was not allowed to spend all of his time in sport, for Music Mouth saw to it that he had work to do, for he had to tan every skin that Red Wing brought in.

His mode of doing this, as taught by the squaw, whose duty it really was, was to stretch the hide out upon the ground, and with a scutching-knife, made of elk-horn, to cut it down, for a buffalo-skin is very thick.

By hacking away with his rough knife he cut the skin down to the necessary thickness, and then rubbed it with grease or brains to make it pliable.

Then he would take white clay and rub it until it was white as snow.

If the robe was to be ornamented Frank would paint it in various designs, or trim it with porcupine-quills, and, having a talent for drawing, he became an adept at the work, and many a warrior would bring him his robe to paint, thanking him by silence when it was finished.

Seeing the warriors dressed in their gorgeous body-robés, which certainly are fancy and striking in appearance, Frank made one for himself, which he put on and strutted about with pride for general inspection.

But Music Mouth spying him, the gorgeous trappings were yanked off of the boy with an earnestness that left Frank naked, and Wolf Catcher, the eldest son and heir of the squaw, was dressed up in the toggery.

One day Frank was out on his pony and dashed into camp with the news that a large herd of buffaloes was in sight.

Instantly the warriors mounted in hot haste, armed with bows, arrows and lances, and dashed out upon the herd, forming a line and surrounding them.

Carried away by the sport, Frank had gone with the warriors, and he killed several of the buffaloes, too, but paid for it upon his return to camp by a thrashing from Music Mouth, who never allowed an opportunity to go by to punish the poor boy.

After the slaughter the squaws began to skin and cut up the game, and to dry the meat for winter use, and in this Frank was forced to help, though he was still smarting from the blows given him by the old red termagant.

This preparing the meat was skillfully done by cutting off strips of flesh, thin and long, and hanging it in the sun to dry.

When perfectly dry it was packed in a bucket made of rawhide, and upon it was poured hot tallow, the bags then being sewn up.

As winter was coming on, the camp was broken up for the tribe to remove to warmer quarters.

The squaws pulled down the tepees and tied the poles fast on each side of the tough little ponies, and upon the long ends, left to drag upon the ground, were piled the lodge skins, robes and winter provisions.

Short poles were also tied to dogs, and upon these were placed the young pappooses.

As Frank was a captive, though an adopted son of the chief, he was forced to do the work of the squaws, Music Mouth hitting him a blow the while to hurry him up.

From pulling down the lodges to putting the pappooses upon the sleds, Frank had to help, or suffer the consequences; and although Red Wing remonstrated he was soon silenced by his wife, who certainly henpecked him to her heart's content, although he was a great chief.

As Frank could see no reason why the chief's wife with her harsh, angry voice had been called Music Mouth, he asked the question of an Indian boy one day while on the march, for he soon learned to speak the language of the red-skins perfectly.

He was informed that she had sung well when a maiden, but he did not believe that such a thing could be possible.

Striking the trail leading up the river, the Indians at last encamped in a forest within view of the famous Minnehaha Falls, now such a point of interest to travelers.

Then all was wildly beautiful about the falls, and the captive boy, young as he was, could not but admire the picturesque scenery under the purple shadows of the Indian summer that rested over all.

The scent of the pines reminded him of the autumn passed in his own home, and he became saddened by the remembrance; and night after night would he lay his head upon the glossy neck of his pony, as he reclined by his side, and cry himself to sleep, as he thought of those he had lost and the hard luck that had fallen upon him in the Indian camp.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEGEND OF THE FALLS.

THE one in the Indian village that little Frank regarded most kindly, and who seemed even willing to sympathize with the poor white boy, was an Indian girl who really possessed a bright and pretty face.

But the circumstance which had given her her name was that her black hair hung in beautiful curls down her back.

Frank had never seen a curly-haired Indian, old or young, and this little girl had attracted his attention from the first.

She was a chief's daughter and a pet with all, and her Indian name was *Pa-he-minne-minish*, which being interpreted means Little-Curly-Hair.

On the trail Frank carried Minne, as she was generally called, behind him on his pony, and the golden-haired boy and curly-haired Indian girl made a pretty picture as they rode along, but one which Music Mouth frequently broke in upon if opportunity offered.

Arriving at their new camp near the Minnehaha Falls, the Indians went into winter quarters, and by day Frank was wont to astonish all by his daring in swimming above the cataract, to which he would approach nearer than any bold warrior dare go.

One day Minne was paddling across above the falls in a light canoe, when her paddle slipped from her hands and instantly she was at the mercy of the swift current.

Frank was, at the time, undergoing torture under the eye of Music Mouth; but hearing the shout of alarm raised by the children, and Minne's wild cry, he darted away like an arrow and plunged into the stream.

Nearing the canoe, which was rapidly drawing near to the falls, Frank called to Minne to jump out.

Instantly she did so, having been too fear-struck before to think of it.

Grasping her he struck out boldly for the shore, she aiding him all in her power, and after a desperate struggle they were drawn to the bank by an Indian warrior who came upon the scene, alarmed by the cries.

Of course Frank received the praises of the warriors for his bold act, but it seemed to infuriate Music Mouth still more against him, and when he arrived at the tepee wet and panting, he was met by the old hag who gave him a severe whipping for running off as he had.

This incident of the falls set the warriors talking about the legends that hung round the place, and creeping up to the camp-fire that night Frank heard Red Wing tell the story of how the cataract was named.

As Red Wing told the story, long years before a tribe dwelt there under a noted chief, whose name was Rolling Thunder.

This chief had a little daughter who almost lived in the water, and so fond of it was she that the Indians gave her the name of Minne, which in their language meant water.

As she grew up she was sought by all the young warriors of her tribe, and by one famous chief whom her father wished her to marry.

But Minne already was in love, and with a pale-face hunter, who trapped in the streams near where dwelt her tribe.

This hunter was young and handsome, and had one day rescued Minne from some braves of a hostile tribe who had captured her, and bringing her back to her village, he was made welcome by Rolling Thunder.

Knowing that the young hunter was poor, having no ponies and few robes, Rolling Thunder set a high price upon Minne, and as her pale-face lover could not pay it, he was forced to give her up.

But one night he stole Minne away from her people, and they were flying together to seek a home elsewhere, when they were pursued by Rolling Thunder and his braves and captured.

The young hunter was bound and thrown into the canoe which was set adrift above the falls, and went over them, amid the wild yells of delight from the Indians upon either bank.

As for poor Minne she mourned deeply for her lover; but her father told her she should marry the chief he had selected for her, and she quit her weeping and the marriage day was set.

At last it came round, and there was a good feast for all, while Minne was the gayest of the maidens present.

They all gathered on the bank of the stream above the falls, to await the ceremony, and Minne wishe to show all her wedding-present, which was a canoe of rare beauty, which she had begged her intended husband to make for her.

Seizing the carved paddle she sprung into the canoe, her face beaming with smiles, and sent the light craft out upon the current.

She was standing up and using her paddle gracefully, and even the Indians were struck with the pretty picture she presented.

But suddenly a voice of warning was heard from the shore, as the canoe began to dart along with the quickening current.

But, with the smile still upon her face, instead of evading her danger, Minne threw her paddle in the bottom of the canoe, and folding her arms, turned her gaze upon the shores, crowded with her people, who were now frantic with dread.

"Minne, come back!" cried the chief, Rolling Thunder.

"Minne, come back!" shrieked the lover.

"Come back! Minne, come back!" shouted a hundred voices.

But on swept the canoe, now dashing along at race-horse speed, and calmly stood the Indian girl, waiting to meet her fate.

A moment more the bow of the canoe was poised in space above the abyss below, and then from the maiden's lips broke in silvery tones of laughter:

"Ha, ha! ha, ha!"

Then, with the ha-ha upon her lips she disappeared over the cataract.

The last sound that came from her lips, that of ba-ha! was put after her name by the Indians, and thus are the falls called *Minnehaha*.

This legend made a deep impression upon the pale-face boy, and he was wont to pass much of his time hanging about the falls, gazing at them in wonder, and as though he expected to see poor Minnehaha in her canoe dashing over to her doom.

By night the Indians shunned the spot, fearing to see the spirit of the suicidal maiden; but Frank had more terror for Music Mouth than for the spirits of all the love-sick Indian maidens that ever died, and, erecting him a bark lodge under the shadow of the cliffs, and where the spray of the falling waters almost fell upon him, he there lived alone.

And this act so worked upon the superstitious minds of the Indians that they began to regard the boy with awe, and even Music Mouth would never go there to seek him, but wait until she could catch him in camp.

CHAPTER V.

RUNNING THE GANTLET.

THE winter at last passed away, and the village moved again to its hunting-grounds in the vicinity of Lake Pepin where the scenery was grandly picturesque.

During the summer Frank showed himself such a skillful hunter that he was ranked among

the boy braves, though the youngest of all who had won that distinction.

As the Indians were about to start again for winter quarters, but to another place far up the Minnesota river, a party of hunters brought in two white men that they had captured after a hard fight, and at the belts of two warriors hung the scalps of two comrades of the prisoners whom they had killed.

As the whites had slain several braves before they were taken, there was wailing in the Indian village, and the captives were turned over to the squaws to have fun with, the said fun consisting in being whacked with sticks, chunked with stones, and maltreated generally.

It made Frank's eyes brighten at first, to see two white men, but then his eyes soon saddened when he thought what would be their fate.

As the camp was about to move it was decided to carry the prisoners on to the winter-quarters, before torturing them, and they were consequently bound and carried along in no mild manner.

Frank did not appear even to notice them, and the Indians who watched him closely, seemed to feel that he had really forgotten his own race.

But when the Indians at last went into their winter-quarter camp, arrangements were made for the torturing of the prisoners, and Frank knew that their end must soon come.

Learning that the warriors were in council, the daring boy crept up back of the lodge, and cutting a hole in the skin covering put his ear there to listen.

It took him not a short while to find out what was to be the fate of the captives, and he at once sought the tepee where they were kept securely bound.

"Buffalo Runner wants to eat dog-stew," said the boy.

This dish always tempted an Indian, and Frank had discovered that fact.

He had shot a dog that afternoon and quickly skinned it, so that his owner could not recognize the carcass, and then he had taken it to Music Mouth who was noted for her dog-stews.

She had made a most delicious, to Indian taste, dish out of the said dog, and a part of this Frank had kidnapped and carried off to his tepee of bark and skins, which was apart from the others, for since he had been at the Minnehaha Falls he had continued to live alone.

Running Buffalo was a young brave, and Frank had cultivated him, seeing that he was one of the guards over the captives.

On this occasion he was hungry for dog stew, and hastened away to Frank's tepee for the coveted dish, the boy promising to keep watch for him.

As soon as he had gone, Frank darted into the guard tepee, and astounded the two captives by saying:

"I wish I could save you, but I cannot, for your arms are in the council lodge, and if you were to go without them you would starve."

"Then winter is coming on too, and you would die in the snow."

"Who are you, boy?" asked one of the men.
"My name is Frank, and I live with the In-

dians; but I have no time to talk about myself, for I wish to tell you that the Indians are going to have you run the gantlet, and I intend to loosen your bonds, so that you won't be too sore and stiff to run, and I'll be there and help you if I can."

He quickly loosened the thongs that bound the feet and hands of the men, rubbing them to start circulation, and then glided back to his post, where Running Buffalo pretty soon after joined him well filled with dog-stew.

The Indian was cunning enough to glance into the tepee, but seeing the captives were all right, he held a long talk with Frank who was anxious to gain his favor.

In the morning the two men were led from the guard lodge and taken to an open space, where all the Indians of the village had ranged themselves in two long lines, with a space of some thirty feet between them.

Men, women and children were armed with sticks and stones and knives, and through this fearful gantlet the men had to run to a distant post two hundred yards away.

If they reached it, their lives were to be spared, providing they lived through the knocks, bruises, and cuts they received.

If they fell under the fearful ordeal, then so much happier would the Indians feel.

As the captives walked to the starting-point the Indians yelled frightfully.

Both of the men limped, although they were not lame, thanks to Frank's forethought; but they wished to lead the Indians to believe that they could hardly walk, and their hopping gait was imitated by the red-skins amid shouts of laughter.

One of the captives was first taken, and told to start.

He had been wounded at the time of his capture, and was still weak, which gave him little confidence in himself, so he turned to his comrade and said sadly:

"I can never make it, pard, so good-by, and tell them at home, if you live to get here, how I died."

Frank saw the tears come into the eyes of the man he addressed, and with a heart full he ran away to get a place in the line.

"Then, at the word of Red Wing, the captive bounded away.

For a short distance he ran well, though sticks and arrows were showered upon him, and then Music Mouth dashed a handful of dirt into his eyes, and he halted half blinded and fell to the ground, when blows were rained thickly upon him, and he was given to the boys to amuse themselves with, which they did by shooting him full of arrows.

Maddened with delight the Indians now turned to witness the next trial.

They saw that their captive limped badly, and expected a slow race; but he bounded away like a deer, and was thirty feet down the line before those nearest him recovered from their surprise.

Like a mettled racer he ran, staggered here and there when severely struck, and cut and bleeding from many wounds.

At last a hunted look came into his face, for he saw that he had run but half the distance, when he heard in English:

"Break through the line here!"

It was Frank that spoke, and the desperate man caught sight of the golden head among the raven locks about him of a score or more of Indian boys and girls he had gathered there to weaken the line.

With hope in his heart the man did as Frank told him, made a bold break, and plunging through the line at that point, upsetting young Indians in all directions, he ran on amid the confusion, and fell with his hand upon the distance post.

The Indians crowded about him, but not another blow was struck, for they seemed to respect him for having gotten the best of them in the race for life, and the medicine-man took him in charge to bind up his wounds, while Frank was appointed to care for him.

But the human nature of the man, brave and hardy as he was, could not stand everything, and he never rallied.

The Indians would have fed him to their dogs, but Frank appealed to Red Wing to let him have the body, and that night dragged it to a lonely spot upon the banks of the stream, and placed it in a grave which he had been all the afternoon digging for its reception.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REPENTANT INDIAN.

ANOTHER winter passed away and still the Lone-White-Boy was a captive in the Indian village, and each day seemed to become more accustomed to his wild life, while the red-skins certainly regarded him as one of their own race.

In the next fall a party of braves went forth upon the war-path, for the Indians craved more excitement than the chase gave them.

After a few weeks' absence the band returned, bringing in plunder from the white settlements, cattle, horses, and alas! a few prisoners, with many scalps.

How this scene reminded poor Frank of the time when he was brought a captive to the Indian camp, and he looked with pitying eyes upon the poor prisoners, among whom were several women.

Of course the village was wild with excitement, and preparations were begun for having a grand scalp-dance and feast in honor of the occasion.

Many whites had been killed, a score or more of scalps had been taken, large numbers of horses had been captured, and the Indians were proud of their success and wild with enthusiasm.

To prepare for the dance they cut willow switches and tied them in a circle, and then, securing the edges of the scalps to these, and letting them dry, they hung them all together upon a long pole.

Around this circle, when all was in readiness, the warriors commenced to dance, yell, leap, beat the air with their arms, and shout out the deeds of valor they had performed.

Each brave in turn would point out the scalps he had taken and tell how the killing had been done, showing where the tomahawk had fallen, or the knife been driven, until Frank turned away sick and sorrowing.

As he did so he noticed an Indian warrior,

young and sad-looking, standing apart from the rest.

In his hands he held a scalp-lock of long, golden-hair, and Frank was surprised that he did not join the dancers.

But the hair looked so like what he remembered his dear mother's had been, that the boy wished to secure it if he could, so he asked the Indian warrior why he did not join the dancers as a means of opening the bargain for the golden scalp-lock.

"The wing of the Black Eagle is broken; he can never go on the war-path again," was the sad answer of the warrior.

But as neither arm seemed wounded, and Frank suspected that he meant one or the other of these when speaking of his wing, he again asked:

"Was the Black Eagle wounded?"

"The body of the Black Eagle is all right, but his heart is hurt."

Now Frank was most anxious to discover what it was that had burst that tough piece of anatomy known as a red-skin's heart, so went at it again with:

"Has the Black Eagle lost the maiden he loved?"

"No, the Black Eagle loves no maiden; but his heart is sad, for the Great Spirit frowns upon him.

"The Black Eagle went upon the war-path full of courage; but his eyes see now the face of a pale-face squaw that begged him for mercy.

"Her eyes looked into the Black Eagle's.

"She fell upon her knees and prayed to the Black Eagle, by his love of the Great Spirit to spare her: but his heart was sick, and he killed the beautiful white squaw.

"See, her scalp-lock is here, and it hurts his heart.

"The Great Spirit frowns upon the Black Eagle, and he bows his head and will no longer go upon the war-path.

"The Black Eagle has spoken, and he will live with the squaws."*

While he was speaking Frank quietly took from his hand the long, golden scalp-lock, and thrust it into the bosom of his buckskin hunting-shirt, the Indian not seeming to notice his act, so cast down was he in sorrow for his deed.†

Feeling an interest in the Indian who had repented, Frank kept a watch upon him, to see if he would be content to live among the squaws.

Soon the sequel came, for the Indian warrior came to him one night and placed his bow and arrow in his hand, while he said, in a clear, firm voice:

"Lone-White Boy, the Black Eagle has no heart to live among squaws.

"He has angered the Great Spirit, and he wishes to die.

* When a warrior gets tender-hearted, or relents, they call him a squaw-brave, and he is made to stay at home and live with the squaws, working with them, and hunting and fighting no more.—THE AUTHOR.

† That lock of hair Frank Carver has kept to this day, and it is among his most cherished treasures, though who was the poor victim from whose head it was torn was never known to him.—THE AUTHOR.

"He does not fear death, and he gives to Lone-White-Boy his bow and arrow with which to kill him.

"See! his heart is ready for the arrow."

He stepped back a few paces as he spoke and bared his breast for the fatal shot.

Frank turned pale at this, for he knew that no power could save him from becoming the Indian's executioner.

The Black Eagle had chosen to die, rather than live as a tender-hearted brave, and in fact he had determined upon suicide.

As his victim, that touched his heart, having been a pale-face, he chose Frank, before all present, to kill him, and the boy knew that he must do the red work.

Realizing this, and possessed of strong character, he lost no time in argument or bewailing, though he wished he could avoid committing the act.

Taking his stand before the Indian, and about ten feet from him, while the silence of death rested upon all, and the camp fires lit with ruddy glow the strange scene, he said, in a distinct voice:

"The Lone-White-Boy holds no hatred for the Black Eagle; but he shall send his arrow deep into his heart."

With Frank's last word the twang of the bow-string came, the thud of the arrow mingled with it, and the shaft was buried in the throbbing bosom of the warrior, who was slowly chanting his death-song.

Down in his tracks he fell, having by his bold act redeemed himself as a warrior, while Frank glided away through the crowd and sought his lonely tepee on the river-bank.

CHAPTER VII.

A MYSTERY SOLVED.

THE Indians had not been very long in their new winter-quarters, when one of the white captives escaped.

Warriors were set to work for his trail as soon as dawn came; but the best trailers, with the closest scrutiny could not discover where he had gone, or how, for not a trace of him could be found.

This was an astounding mystery to the redskins, and yet they would not give up the hunt, but kept on the search to solve the strange occurrence for days.

The guard tepees where the captives were kept were in one end of the camp, under the shelter of a heavily-wooded bluff, and there was no means of leaving them unless a person passed straight through the village.

Was it possible, they thought, for a pale-face to do this and not attract the attention of some one?

If he did so he certainly was a remarkable personage.

Hardly had the excitement died away over the escape of the prisoner, before one morning a second one was missing from the camp.

The Indian guards, and there were two of them, stated that they were on the watch all night, and they were not warriors that could be suspected, so no treachery on their part was to be thought.

This second prisoner, like the other one, also

left no trail behind to show whither he had gone, or how, and there was no pony missing from the corral.

For days the Indians were most watchful, and at night guards were kept posted in the village.

But after awhile this watchfulness was relaxed, and one night of storm two more of the captives, a man and a woman, made their escape in the same mysterious way that the others had departed.

This set the red-skins nearly wild, while the mystery attending their captives' escapes, excited their superstitious fears in a remarkable degree.

Of the captives brought with them to the village upon their last raid, seventeen in number, but three now remained, a man and two women.

Four had escaped, three were yet prisoners, and ten had succumbed to death from the hardships and tortures they had undergone, for most brutally were they treated.

That these three should not escape the red-skins were determined, so they bound them hands and feet, when night came on, and placed them in the tepee, while a line of guards was stationed right across the village from hill to hill, for the camp was in a canyon.

Yet, that very night, under the very noses of the guards, two more of the captives made their escape, their bonds having been cut in some mysterious way.

The one left was a young woman in rather delicate health, and she remained in the tepee bound, as she was when placed there.

In their wild fury the Indians tried to force from her the secret of how the others had escaped, and every red-skin in the village who understood any English questioned her.

But her reply was to all:

"I can tell you nothing about it."

Then Frank was called, and Red Wing bade him question the poor young woman.

He did so, but to him she made the same re-

sponse.

They then told Frank to tell her that if she did not confess to them, on the morrow she should be tortured to death.

Frank very coolly told her, and, though she became deadly pale she said she could not tell them.

Then night came on, and the camp was in a *furore* of excitement, and it was very evident to all that there was a traitor in camp.

Whom to suspect they did not know, and yet warriors began to look with suspicion upon each other.

With the night growing older the Indians began to disperse to their tepees, and soon the village was left to the guards alone, and would have been silent but for the barking of innumerable dogs that always are to be found in Indian villages.

Suddenly another sound broke the silence.

It was the sharp report of a rifle, and then a ringing war-cry, followed by a woman's shriek.

Then out of the guard tepee darted a warrior in no little alarm, for he came with such haste that he brought half the lodge with him.

Pell-mell out of their tepees rushed the In-

dians, the warriors seizing their weapons, and all hastening up the canyon to where it was evident the turmoil originated.

That the guard tepee was the scene of action there could be no doubt, and soon a hundred or more braves gathered around the dilapidated lodge, while fires were built to give light to the scene.

Then all eyes turned upon the interior of the lodge and the mystery was solved.

The captive woman lay bound and weeping bitterly upon a buffalo-robe, while at her feet was a slender, prostrate form.

It was poor Frank, his golden hair stained with blood from a bullet wound in his head.

At first sight all believed him dead; and the warriors stood in silence listening to the report of the warrior who had been secretly placed in the guard tepee.

He talked somewhat excitedly for a brave, showing that he had had a severe fright and not yet had gained his nerve.

His story was that the captive was very restless at first, and talked aloud in English, as though to herself.

But he soon grew accustomed to this and dropped off to sleep.

He was awakened by something dropping in his face, and looking up he saw that the top of the tepee seemed open, while a human form moved down into the opening.

He heard the woman utter some words of warning, and seeing the form hanging above him he thought it was an evil spirit and fired the pistol with which he was armed.

Down upon him fell the form, and he dashed out of the tepee with such haste as to nearly upset it.

That human form was now seen to be Frank, and a glance at the top of the tepee showed that the skin about the poles had been ripped loose and could be pulled back.

And more, into the opening hung a swinging ladder rudely made of raw hides.

This ladder hung down sixty feet from the branch of a tree growing from the cliff above, and told the story of the mysterious escape of the other captives.

That Frank had laid the plot, made the ladder, and descended by it into the top of the tepee, thus aiding the captives to escape, there was no doubt.

By the ladder they had reached the cliff above and from there gained some safe retreat.

Of course they must all then be somewhere in the vicinity of the village, for the women could not escape alone from the country, and the men would not certainly leave them, the warriors reasoned.

Something had prevented the young woman from leaving the night before, and returning to aid her, the boy had been surprised and shot by the watcher.

What that boy deserved was death, and for awhile it was believed that he was dead; but then the Medicine Chief said he was only stunned, that the bullet had glanced upon his head and that he would recover to die by torture.

CHAPTER VIII.

LONE-WHITE-BOY'S CUNNING.

RED WING had learned to love Wa-se-a-chas-su el-la, and raising the insensible boy in his arms he bore him to his tepee and ordered Music Mouth to care for him.

But she looked vicious and brandished a knife threateningly, and the henpecked chief suddenly became a lion and knocked Music Mouth down and beat her, while he warned her if harm befell the pale-face boy that she would rue it.

Music Mouth was both scared and bruised, and she arose a respectful and obedient wife, though greatly surprised that her lord and master should handle her so roughly.

Then Red Wing went to the Council Lodge, where all the chiefs and warriors of importance were congregated for a talk.

There was blood in their eyes as Red Wing entered, and they at once counseled torturing the boy to death at once.

But this Red Wing would not hear to, and he demanded that the boy should first recover and then it would be decided what to do with him.

The warriors, however, longed for bloodshed of some kind, and therefore it was determined to first force from the unfortunate female captive the secret of where her companions were hiding and then put her to death by torture.

This it was decided would be just the thing, and the poor woman was led out amid a terrible hubbub in camp, for the warriors were yelling, the squaws shouting, children screaming, and dogs howling and yelping in one grand midnight chorus.

The poor woman was nearer dead than alive, but her face was firm in the resolve she had made not to betray her companions.

Before the red fiends she was dragged, and Red Wing told her in his best English that her life would be spared if she told all, but that she should die by torture if she refused.

She seemed to instinctively know that the chief was lying and was well aware that she was to die, so she said simply:

"I will die, for my tongue shall never tell that which will bring my friends back to this hell on earth."

The warriors smiled, for they anticipated rare sport in seeing the brave woman die by torture.

But their smile turned to a look of wild disappointment very suddenly, when they saw the woman make a quick movement with her right hand, and heard the thud as a knife descended to her heart.

"Now do your worst, you demons, and may God forgive me," she cried, as she fell dead before them.

The warriors were in a fury at their disappointment, and the squaws were wild with rage; but no one touched the dead form, and they gazed upon it with awe and even respect, for the Indian creed is that one who is brave enough to commit suicide is a favored one in the eyes of the Great Spirit, and should be treated with reverence.

The brave woman had tried to give warning to Frank, that a warrior was in the tepee to en-

trap him, but she dared not speak loud, and he had come down the ladder into the trap.

Though the night before an alarm, as a warrior came toward the tepee, had prevented her escape with the others, had not the brave stayed in the lodge, there is no doubt but that she would have gotten away without difficulty, for the most cunning red-skin had never suspected that the captives had departed through mid air.

This plot had originated with Frank, and he had made the rawhide ladder for the purpose and fastened it upon the limb of the tree overhanging the grand lodge.

Then he had boldly come down on it, cut the skin in the top of the tepee to admit him, and by this means had rescued the captives.

Nor had the cunning young plotter stopped there, for he had placed mufflers for their feet upon the cliff, so that no trail was left to the river, where a rude bark canoe had been constructed that carried them some miles down the river to a cave in the bank, which Frank had discovered one day.

With the first glimmer of day a hundred warriors were upon the cliff, examining the skillful contrivance of the daring boy and searching for the trail of the fugitives.

The trail could not be found that day, but a young warrior coming up the river the next morning came upon fresh tracks and followed them to the cave.

Hastening to the village, he made known his discovery, and scores of warriors rode at full speed to the spot.

But the fugitives had departed the day before, as all signs showed, and their means of locomotion away from the dangerous locality the redskins discovered was by means of a raft made of timber cut near the cavern.

That Frank had not half done his work was also discovered, as signs about proved that he had supplied the captives with provisions.

A few warriors started off upon the wild-goose chase of trying to overtake the fugitives, but, a snow storm setting in soon after their departure, they were glad enough to return to the village.

As for the poor boy, when he recovered from the stunning effects of the shock of the bullet, he had a high fever and began to rave in delirium.

The Medicine Chief always liked the boy, and attended him faithfully, while Minne, or Curly-Hair, was a most devoted nurse, and sat by the boy invalid day after day, giving him the herb medicines the Indian doctor had prescribed for him.

Long weeks of illness ensued, in which he made the Indians strangely superstitious about him by his wild ravings, for he would talk of his mother, the golden scalp-lock, and the pretty young woman whom he had tried to rescue.

In that condition no Indian would have dared to touch him; but they were determined to kill him when he got well, and the old warriors bade the medicine-man not to let him die and thereby disappoint them.

That the Indians intended to kill Frank, Curly-Hair discovered in good time, and she at once told the boy of her discovery, at the same time telling him to pretend to be delirious until he regained strength enough to make his escape.

But Frank was well aware that with snow upon the ground in mid-winter, escape would be impossible, so he determined to play a cunning game upon the superstitious warriors.

One day when the medicine-man entered the tepee, Frank, to the amazement of the old herb fraud—for such are most Indian medicine-men, and a few who are not red-skins, too, I may add—sat up and looked him straight in the eyes.

Then he bade him summon the head warriors, for he had a revelation to make.

In they came, crowding into the tepee, full of dignity and dirt, and Frank told them how a spirit had come to his lodge by night and told him he must rescue the pale-faces, or bad medicine* would come to the band.

This story worked well with the superstitious red-skins, and they told him that he did perfectly right to do as the spirit bade him do, and that it was always right to listen to the spirit voice, for so their fathers had taught them.

They also said that the spirit must have helped him, or he could never have set the captives free, and they left the tepee deeply impressed with the idea that the Lone-White-Boy was no ordinary personage, young as he was, when spirits would seek him out to bid him do things few braves would undertake.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOY HUNTER.

AFTER his recovery and lucky escape from being tortured to death, Frank turned his attention to hunting, and his constant "pard" was Little-Curly-Head, who soon became a splendid rider.

Together the two children would scour the prairies on their fleet little ponies, and the game that they brought in would make the red-skin loafers about the camp happy.

One day in the spring Frank went out to catch a young antelope, and Curly-Hair, as usual, went with him.

She had never enjoyed this sport, so she was delighted at the anticipated fun.

Suddenly a little animal jumped over them and ran off like a jack-rabbit.

Instantly Frank dashed after him in full pursuit, and by pushing his horse hard soon came up with him, when with his rawhide lariat he caught it around the neck, showing the greatest skill in catching so small an animal, as they can frequently jump through the noose.

Turning to show his prize to Curly-Hair, or Minne, as he called her, he found the little girl pushing her pony hard in chase of another young antelope, and after he had secured his game he went to join her, for he saw that she had come to a halt.

Minne he found with tears in her eyes, bending over her prize, which had its forelegs almost cut off.

Frank explained to her that she had run it too hard, as when very tired an antelope can not get its fore legs out of the way and they are cut to pieces by the sharp hoofs upon the hind legs.

He told her that the only way was to catch

them at once, with as little running as possible, and so apt a pupil was Minne, that she caught two more of the pretty little animals before they returned to camp.

Some weeks after the antelope-hunt, Frank told Minne a secret, to the effect that he intended to play a joke upon two crabbed old bachelor warriors who never seemed to like him.

He had enlisted a dozen Indian boys with him in the joke, and he was to capture a buffalo bull and carry it to camp with them, as best they could.

The two warriors had a tepee in the middle of the village, near the Council Lodge, and they never went to bed until late, so they were to be gotten off on some excuse and the buffalo bull put in their quarters.

As long as he saw that he was fenced in, if it was only by the hide of some of his kindred he would keep quiet.

But let the flap of the tepee be raised and daylight, or darkness, be seen, in fact let him get a glimpse of outside, and out he would come.

Of course Frank intended that the buffalo, when helpless in his hands, should be dressed up for the occasion, so as to make him as terrible in appearance as possible.

The first thing to be done was to get the buffalo bull, which was no small task.

The next thing, to get him into the wigwam unseen by curious eyes.

This could only be done by taking advantage of the absence of the two sour-natured warriors, when they went to look after their traps, which they did twice a week, going in the afternoon, remaining all night and returning late the next evening and seating themselves at the fires of some of their friends until bedtime.

Their habits were so well known that they could be counted on to aid the boys in their joke, and they were most generally disliked in the village, so Frank thought no great harm would be done.

Mounting their horses Frank and Minne set out to find the buffalo.

They caught several buffalo calves, but these he kept to take into camp to eat, for he had had plenty of fun with youngsters of that kind trying to tame them.

Buffalo calves are hard to tame, for they always are ready to fight, and sometime would create sad havoc in the camp.

Suddenly they came upon an old bull, standing at the head of a ravine, and they darted for him.

Frank threw his lariat about his fore legs Minne roped his hind legs, and down he came, so that he was quickly secured by the boy.

But the old bull bellowed so, and became so enraged at finding his power gone, that Frank saw that it would kill him, and was about to turn him loose when the animal suddenly died like a man with heart disease.*

The two young hunters had now to look up another buffalo and they found one; but he was so savage that Frank had to shoot him.

Using the body for a sofa they sat down to rest, believing the buffalo dead; but suddenly

* As a rule an old buffalo will die upon being caught, though not in the least hurt.—THE AUTHOR.

they went flying into the air, Minne upon one side, Frank on the other, while the old buffalo roared and pranced about in a fury.

Seeing Minne, in his rage he started for her, and for once her nerve left her and she could not get out of the way; but smarting as he was from his fall, for he had been hoisted pretty high, Frank sprung for his rifle, which had been given him by Red Wing, and dropped the bull when he was within five feet of the Indian girl.

"Two times Frank save Minne," said the grateful girl, holding up her two thumbs and speaking in English, for Frank kept up his own tongue by teaching it to the little Indians.

Frank was now determined not to go back without a buffalo, so they set off again and soon captured a fine specimen, throwing him as before.

But to prevent his dying in his rage the boy drove a pin into the prairie, and tying the two lariats together, staked Mister Buffalo out to get accustomed to his captivity by degrees.

Then the two hunters went back to camp, and the boy brigade, who followed the lead of the pale-face captive, were informed of the capture and their hearts were glad.

CHAPTER X.

FRANK'S JOKE ON THE INDIAN BACHELORS.

WATCHING their chance the boys went for the buffalo, led by Frank, as soon as the bachelor warriors departed to go on a round of their traps.

The animal was found, but in no very good humor, and with considerable difficulty was coaxed, urged, dragged and pushed to a ravine near camp.

Then Frank arranged a little plan to get him to the tepee at night as quietly as possible.

This plan was to put several large buffalo-robies together and fasten to them rawhide ropes, which were to be attached to three ponies.

Then the buffalo was to be tripped up and fall on this novel vehicle, when he was to be quietly dragged through the village to the tepee.

Late that night the boys set to work, and when no one was stirring they dragged their game to his temporary quarters.

The buffalo was mad and alarmed, but he was in the hands of skillful diplomats, who were determined all should go well if he did not die on their hands.

Into the tepee he was gotten, and it is amazing how the young jokers accomplished it; but boys will do more work than men can do if bent on a joke, even if they are Indian youths.

Once in the tepee and all in readiness, the robes having been drawn out and all put in ship-shape order, Frank decorated his buffalo by painting his head white and his body red, while he attached to his tail a streamer.

Then the animal's hopples were taken off, the tepee being first firmly closed, and he stood up like a major, not daring to move, although had he done so he would have shot off with the tepee like a racer.

Happy over their work, the boys then rubbed

out as well as they could the trace of where the animal had been dragged through the village, and retired to rest to await the coming night.

The day following dragged its weary length along to the daring young jokers, and children played near the tepee without once thinking what it held.

Once Frank slipped up behind it and took a peep though a hole he made with a sharp stick.

There stood the instrument to be used in the joke, mad but passive, as though he was patiently biding his time of action.

With nightfall the boys began to be more energetic th n usual, and brought wood for many fires, without being told to do so, and the result was that the camp looked most cheery.

The two bachelors arrived as usual, just after sunset, put their horses in the corral, and were on their way through the village, scenting supper as they went along, and waiting for an invitation to join in the pleasant task of eating.

Frank spied them, and as Music Mouth had a most tempting meal prepared, he called to them to join the family at supper.

The invitation was gladly accepted, and the meal passed off pleasantly and rapidly, as was the custom, for an Indian eats fast and much.

Here and there were shouts of laughter in the village, some musicians were playing over near the council lodge, and all was going well, when a roar like thunder resounded though the camp.

The skies were clear, and from whence came the sound no one knew, or at least, no one that cared to tell.

Arising with some alarm, the bachelor warriors determined to seek their tepee, to be prepared for any emergency that might occur.

The boys were on the alert, and anxious, for the old buffalo bull having given vent to a bellow that shook the village, was getting impatient they knew.

Together the two warriors approached the tepee, and untying the strings that held down the flap, threw it up with no more idea of harm than a new born babe.

Then came another terrific roar, and one of the warriors was knocked about twenty feet, while the other was tossed about as high, and came down with a thump that shook him up considerably.

Mingling with the roar of the buffalo were their war-whoops, for they evidently thought that the Devil was upon them, and they had him to fight.

Then were heard the screams of children, the shrieks of squaws, the shouts of braves, the yells of Frank and his pards, and the yelping, howling ki-yi, ki-yi of dogs of all sizes, while the hideous-looking animal, with white head, red body, and tail erect, from which flouted streamers, went tearing through the village.

Here a dog was killed, and there a tepee was knocked over, and now and then a squaw or brave was shot up into the air in a way that was astonishing.

Not a shot was fired at the animal, for every brave believed it to be a bad spirit on the rampage, and running a muck through the village.

The medicine-men and sages had never seen anything like it before, and they quickly hied themselves to their tepees in dismay.

The scene was beyond description, and terrible.

In his wildest moments of hope, Frank had never anticipated anything half as delightful, and he rolled over on the ground, shouting with laughter, until Music Mouth came tearing along at a 2:40 gait, a young pappoose under each arm, and tumbled over him.

Even Red Wing was worked up to a pitch of excitement, while warriors were seen about the camp roosting in trees, and only sorry that they could not pull the trees up after them.

Out upon the prairie shot the maddened buffalo bull, and disappeared in the darkness, leaving fright, confusion and suffering behind him, for a score or more had been more or less injured.

Anxious about the after-clap, Frank and his confederates in guilt, slipped off to their robe-couches and pretended sleep.

But all through the night they were kept awake with the excitement in the village, and not until day dawned did the confusion calm down.

As for the bachelor-warriors they were speechless.

The wind had been knocked out of the one, and the senses out of the other; but they were gathered together and cared for, but not in their tepee.

No, no, they at once changed their quarters, for they could not stay in that lodge.

For several days the excitement kept up, and then a warrior shot the buffalo upon the prairie, while he was chasing a herd to death, for in his painted form he was not recognized as one of them.

The tail ornaments, which the Indians had described as being flames of fire, were found to be ox-strips of a red blanket, while the head and zebra-like stripes of crimson and white were found to be paint.

Then a calm powwow was held, and all knew it was a joke; but the bachelor-warriors looked grim death, when others grinned and they went on a tour to their traps and did not return for a week or more.

CHAPTER XI. LONE-WHITE-BOY'S SECRET.

ONE day Frank went out alone on a hunt, and all were glad to see him go, for he had become so expert that he could kill more game than any warrior in the camp, and he always divided the result of his chase around very liberally.

As he rode toward his favorite hunting-grounds he did not observe two persons watching him from the pine thicket on the ridge.

Seeing which course he took, the two warriors, for such they were, quickly mounted their ponies and followed him slowly.

He kept on, little dreaming that he was followed, and, after a ride of some ten miles struck a herd of buffalo.

He killed several, and cutting out the choice pieces, wrapped them in the skin of one of the animals and left them until his return, for he was anxious to also get some smaller game.

Going down into a ravine he halted at a spring for some water, and just as he slid from

his horse an arrow came flying over his head, while a second one struck him in the arm.

Instantly he dropped down behind a log that was there, and pretended to be dead, for he felt that the one who had fired the arrow that missed him was sure that it had struck him.

His pony jerked away from him and trotted off a short distance, and then Frank saw two Indians dodging through the timber and approaching him.

He had fallen in such a way that he had his rifle ready for use, but his bow and arrows he could not get at without moving and showing his enemies that he was really alive.

Though believing that they had killed him, they approached him most cautiously, and stood watching him for a long time.

Then, as though to make sure one of them sent an arrow at him.

This was a fearful ordeal for Frank, as he knew not where the arrow would strike; but he never flinched, though the point buried itself in his shoulder.

This convinced the Indians that he was dead, and with yells they sprung forward toward him.

Leaving the shelter of the timber they were now all exposed, and within five paces of him, when the rifle of the white boy cracked and a warrior fell dead.

At the same instant, before the astonished brave that lived, could fit an arrow to his bow, Frank sent his tomahawk whirling through the air directly at him.

Straight it went, and striking the warrior in the head knocked him senseless.

To spring on him and kill him was the work of an instant, and then Frank stood looking at his human game with no pleasant feelings.

They were the bachelor braves.

They had sought his life, and he had taken theirs.

But they were Indians, and he was a white boy, and he did not doubt but that it would go hard with him.

He was in the depths of the Indian country, and he was not sure that he could make his escape.

He was wounded in the arm and the shoulder, and both arrows he had to draw out of the wounds, which gave him a sickening sensation.

What to do he did not know, for the warriors would be found, and he must account for his wounds, while his trail and theirs would be readily tracked.

No, he must go and tell of the affair as it occurred and trust to the mercy of the tribe.

Hardly had he come to this determination when he suddenly caught sight of an Indian coming up the ravine with the greatest apparent caution.

One glance was sufficient to show Frank that the new-comer was not of his tribe, and more that he was a Pawnee, one of their bitterest foes.

A Pawnee would certainly not be there alone, he thought, and he must be cautious.

From where he stood he saw that he was not visible to the Indian, and if he came nearer he could readily pick him off with his rifle, which he had instinctively loaded.

And the Pawnee did come nearer, when Frank, not wishing to risk a shot that might give a warning to others, slung his rifle upon his back, and seizing his bow drew an arrow from its quiver.

The next instant the dart went flying on its fatal course and buried itself to the shaft in the body of the Pawnee.

So fatal was the shot, that the warrior fell dead from his pony without a groan.

Then Frank made his way cautiously toward him and saw that he was a chief.

Quickly he secured his war-bonnet, and then with the coolness an Indian would have shown took his scalp, the first one he had ever taken.

Catching the Pawnee's pony, which was a splendid animal, and also his own, he hitched them near by, while he went on foot to reconnoiter.

Ascending a ridge he glanced over upon a little stretch of prairie surrounded by hills, and he was fairly startled at the sight he saw.

Their, encamped in a small space, was a large band of warriors.

Their horses were staked out near by, and the riders were grouped together as though they were in council.

That they were Pawnees, Frank recognized at a glance.

That there were five hundred of them a rapid count soon showed him.

Their destination, he was aware, could but be the village of Red Wing, and they had camped there to rest and await the coming of night, when they would ride on rapidly and surprise the village.

The chief he had killed had doubtless gone ahead to reconnoiter, and if they came through the ravine where he then was, as they doubtless would, it would be too dark to discover traces of what had occurred there.

To guard against this Frank hastened back, dragged the bodies of the dead Pawnee and the two who had sought revenge upon him, out of the way, and turning the ponies of the latter loose, he mounted his own horse, and with the captured animals leading, rode rapidly back to the village, muttering to himself:

"I will keep my secret and let the Pawnees get the credit of killing those two old braves who wanted to get even with me for the joke of the buffalo."

CHAPTER XII.

THE WARNING.

FRANK did not spare his pony and the led horse on his way to the village, and those who saw him coming saw that something was the matter by his riding so swiftly and also having an animal with him.

Straight up to the Council Lodge he rode, for there was a meeting of the chiefs, and holding out his scalp, he said, with excusable pride:

"Let the warriors of my tribe see the scalp that Lone-White-Boy has taken from a Pawnee chief."

The braves were amazed and loud in their praise of the boy, while Red Wing said, proudly:

"My son will be a great chief."

"But where was the Pawnee chief?"

"He was coming with his braves, over half a thousand in number, to attack the village of my people."

This was news that caused consternation in the hearts of the tribe, for with all his warriors mustered, Red Wing could not raise over four hundred.

In a few words Frank told of his discovery, and how he had met the Pawnee in the ravine and killed him; but he took precious good care to keep his secret about how he had slain the two warriors of his own tribe.

After relating his fight with the Pawnee, he told the listening warriors how he had gone on the trail to see what he could find out, and that he had discovered the band of red-skins halted on the prairie and awaiting the coming of night.

The chiefs and warriors were terribly alarmed and knew not what to do; but it was decided to run off with the village at once and take refuge deeper in the hills, and there make a stand against their foes.

But Frank had an eye to a better way out of the difficulty, and he asked quietly, as he stood in the midst of the warriors:

"Can the Lone-White-Boy speak?"

"Yes, the Lone-White-Boy can have his talk."

"What has he to say?" answered Red Wing.

Thus allowed to have a chance to get a word in edgeways, Frank drew himself up to his full height, which was not very great, and said:

"My people do not wish to run from the Pawnees like antelopes."

"Let them fight them and beat them."

This was an astounding proposition from a boy, and an old warrior said rudely:

"The-Lone-White-Boy talks like a squaw."

"He is a pappoose, and should go and play near his mother."

Frank turned upon the old warrior with angry eyes, and answered hotly:

"The Rock Heart talks like a squaw."

"Let him hear the Lone-White-Boy's words, before he calls him a pappoose."

"The Lone-White-Boy is no pappoose, for he has here the scalp of a Pawnee chief, and he comes as a brave from the war-path, to warn his people of danger."

"If the Rock Heart is too old to fight, let him go with the squaws, and the Lone-White-Boy will fight to keep his gray scalp from the belt of a Pawnee."

This bold speech fairly astounded the warriors.

They knew well that Frank was far ahead of any youth in the village anywhere within two years of his age.

He could tumble them about easily in a wrestling match, could outrun, outjump and outshoot with rifle or bow, any one of them, while he was the best hunter of the tribe, and could boast of having more robes and skins than any of them.

Now he had an enemy's scalp, and brought them startling news, and most valuable news, that none of their scouts had been able to discover, and more, he boldly hurled back words of defiance into the teeth of Rock Heart, one of the oldest and best warriors in the tribe.

"Yes, the Lone-Boy has a scalp, and he brings us a warning."

"Let him be heard," said Red Wing.

"Let the Lone-White-Boy be heard," cried many voices, for the braves were in hopes that the quick wit of the white youth would help them out of their trouble in some way.

"Let the Lone-Boy speak," said Rock Heart, with real generosity, for had he refused, Frank would have been sat on, as far as his speech-making was concerned.

"The Lone-White-Boy has little to say."

"He saw the foes of his tribe, and their faces are turned toward this village."

"When night falls, they will dash upon us."

"But let my people not run off like wounded buffaloes hiding from wolves."

"Let them stay here."

"See, the forest is thick yonder on the ridge, and the squaws and papoosees can go there."

"Then let the braves dig holes in which to hide, let them find places in the trees, and along the tops of the cliff yonder, while the camp-fires are allowed to burn, and the tepees are left standing."

"The foes of my people will ride into the village from the end of the ravine, and they will expect to find us asleep; but our braves can shoot them down in the village, while others can come behind them in the gap, and hundreds of scalps will hang upon our lodge-poles."

"The Lone-White-Boy has spoken."

Instantly old Rock Heart had laid his hand on Frank's head, while a murmur of applause went round the group.

"The pale-face boy is one of our people, and his brain is full of wisdom, and his heart is full of bravery."

"He has spoken like a medicine-man, he talks like a great chief."

"The Rock Heart, an old warrior with snow upon his head, will do as the boy says is best."

This speech from the old warrior was a clincher, and the braves went into secret council, to which Frank was admitted, that he might the better explain his ideas.

Puffed up with importance, he stalked over to the lodge of his adopted father, the envy of all the youths in the village, who had their black, beadlike eyes upon all that was passing, and he was suddenly met by Music Mouth with an amateur club, with which she knocked all of the pride and importance out of Frank in two strokes, and caused him to take to his heels with a lack of dignity and an alacrity that ill-became the adviser of braves.

Music Mouth's motive was jealousy, because hopeful Wolf Catcher had not been in Frank's shoes; but she calmly lied upon the subject by saying that she had pounded Frank as he brought back no game.

Whatever the motive, Frank used Indian profanity upon her, as he sat at a distance rubbing himself, and wishing that he had her scalp at his belt instead of that of the Pawnee chief.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRANK WINS HIS SPURS.

SCOUTS were sent off to reconnoiter, soon after Frank arrived in the village, and runners were dispatched to bring in all the straggling braves that might be hunting in the neighborhood.

Then the ponies and stolen cattle, the product of many a raid against the whites, were put in a corral in the hills, while the smaller children and old men and squaws were removed to the ridge for safety.

The able-bodied squaws and warriors then became busy in erecting breastworks and screens behind which the braves could fight, and many an innocent-looking woodpile was arranged so that it might hold half a dozen braves.

As soon as darkness came on, the fires were built, and the squaws were run off to the ridge, while the braves many of them took their positions to calmly await the attack.

The line of pits, or screens had been so placed that they would not bring a cross-fire upon each other, and along the sides of the hill, and upon the cliff, warriors were stationed, all armed with quivers of arrows, so that they could pour in a hot fire upon their foes.

There were in the band but a few firearms, and these not of a superior kind; but Frank had picked out for himself a position right where the thick of the fight would be, and had his powder, bullets and caps all laid out in charges ready, so that he could load rapidly.

Then, also, he did not neglect the precaution of taking his bow and several quivers of arrows with him.

It might have been accident, but certain it is that Red Wing and some of his most distinguished warriors stationed themselves near Frank, some of them even deserting positions which they had previously chosen, to do so.

Perhaps they liked to be near the rifle that they knew would not err.

Toward evening scouts came in and reported the Pawnees still huddled in the little prairie, and anxiously trying to keep hidden, while many of them were busy with their weapons, and repainting their faces.

The scouts reported also that they had come upon the horses of the warriors whom Frank had killed, and following their trail, had discovered that their riders had been killed and scalped by the Panwees.

More they did not try to find out, as they feared there might be Pawnees in the ravine.

Frank heard their report without flinching, and muttered:

"It was lucky I thought of scalping those braves, so they would think the Pawnees killed them."

"I guess I will keep the scalps to add to my string after the fight is over; but maybe old Music Mouth will smell out the scent that they are not Pawnee scalps, so I think I'll let 'em go."

No one but an Indian can so complacently and patiently resign himself to quietude and contentment while waiting for a coming foe, and from the perfect silence that reigned we would have believed that the ambushed braves were all asleep.

But not so, for every warrior was keenly on the watch.

After hours of waiting the eyes of those in the front ambuscade detected a dark mass moving up toward the village.

It came slowly, and could only be the coming Pawnees.

The fires in the Indian camp were burning

low, and no one was seen moving about among the tepees, so that the attacking party evidently believed that their cherished wish had been realized, and they were to give their foes a complete surprise.

Nearer and nearer came the mass, and now and then a snort from some impatient young pony was heard.

Nearer and nearer, and then there broke forth from five hundred throats a yell that was fearful, while on the ponies were urged at a rush into the village.

But no answering cry yet came from the village, until the invaders had reached the first line of tepees.

Then Frank fired his rifle, and a chief fell from his horse, while the war-cries resounded now upon all sides, and the air was thick with arrows sent upon their fatal flight.

Down went horses and riders, and Frank was in his first grand battle.

Surprised, where they had expected to surprise, bewildered at the fall of scores of horses and braves, the mass of the attacking force halted in the very presence of their foes, and it was some moments before they realized that they were being slaughtered, yet could find no foe to fight.

Then, becoming panic-struck they wheeled in flight, when bands of their foes closed in upon them from either side, and it became one mad, wild stampede.

Mounting in hot haste as soon as they could get to their horses, three hundred warriors of the village dashed on in hot chase, and with ponies that were perfectly fresh and not jaded by a long ride into an enemy's country, they pressed the hostile band hotly, and forced them to rally in a compact mass and retreat slowly for protection.

All the night through the Pawnees were pursued, and then the village warriors, utterly worn out, and content with their grand victory, turned back, leaving their foes to continue their way, utterly demoralized by their stinging defeat.

With the pursuing party Frank went, and the crack of his rifle was often heard through the night, while, upon his return to camp, he was able to count scalps with any of the braves of his tribe.

It was late in the afternoon before the pursuers got back, and they found the village wild over the glorious victory, and fully two-score scalps already hanging from the scalp-pole.

A few prisoners had been taken, but those who were wounded had been quickly put to death by the infuriated squaws and children, and when the tribe was once more united, and the loss among the villages was found to be very slight, the jubilation knew no bounds, and feasting and enjoyment was the order of the day and night, while many a dog had to be sacrificed in honor of the defeat of their foes, for "canine-stew" was a dish worthy of heroes, and among the latter was Lone-White-Boy, who won the praise of all, and was positively stuffed with bow-wow stew by his admirers, who admitted that he had won the title of brave, though a papoose in years.

CHAPTER XIV.

FRANK'S FIRST PURCHASE.

SOON after the victory over the Pawnees, the Indians were made sorrowful by the death of a chief, Little Wolf.

He was taken sick from over-eating, and died in agony, surrounded by his kindred, who despised him.

He was not a popular leader, by any means, but then he was a chief, and it was necessary, according to the Indian creed, to give him a *gala* send-off to the happy hunting-grounds.

The village, therefore, went into the most doleful degree of mourning.

They painted themselves black, fasted three days and nights, singing the while their mournful death-songs, and howling and screeching like demons.

They pounded themselves, too, and more hair was pulled out by the roots than would set up a young tribe just beginning business in scalps.

Warriors worked themselves into perspiration and tears, and squaws screeched like hyenas, while Frank enjoyed the fun, though he was also deeply impressed with the Indian ways, from his long life in their midst.

After a grand pow-wow it was decided to bury Little Wolf upon the river bank, by the Falls of St. Anthony.

He had been to the councils of the pale-faces, had seen the Great Father in Washington, so that honor must be shown his memory when dead, whatever had been thought of him while living.

He had a large medal presented him by the Great Father, and this was to be buried with him, to show those he would meet in the happy hunting-grounds that he had been "no slouch" in this world.

On one side of this medal was engraved "Peace and Friendship," and the reverse had two hands clasped.

If the former had been "Great Father come West, Little Wolf scalp him," and the reverse a hand grasping a scalp, the medal would have been more appropriate, for the Little Wolf had gone on a raid against the whites as soon as he had returned from his "peace-council" at Washington.

But the chief was buried in style, his arms were placed with him in the grave, and his war-horse was killed upon the grave, that he might not go into the happy hunting-grounds like a tramp, but skip in on horseback.

Food was also placed for him on his long journey, and he certainly received every attention that the barbarous living could show to the savage dead.

While camped near the Falls of St. Anthony a temporary peace was patched up between the red-skins and whites, and the hatchet was buried, but the Indians took mighty good care to let the handle remain sticking out to be grasped in haste.

Under cover of this peace a party of white traders came out to supply the Indians with articles needful, and such a lot of cheating was gone through by the pale-faces that it is a wonder that they were not suspected of being Government officials.

They would give a quarter of a pound of sugar for a fine robe that would bring in the city twenty dollars, while fifty cents' worth of groceries or other articles would get fifty dollars' worth of furs.

Frank spied in the hands of one of the traders a fine rifle, silver-mounted and of the Hawkins pattern, which was at that time much used by fine shots.

He asked the price of it, and was told that it was not for sale.

He wished to know what such a rifle was worth.

The trader told him a sum about ten times its value.

Frank then brought some fine robes and asked what was their value in money.

The trader answered, giving him an estimate at about one-tenth of what they would really sell for.

Putting the price of the rifle and that of his robes together, Frank figured out how many it would take to make his purchase.

These he got and offered to the trader.

It was a tempting offer, worth really twenty times the value of the rifle, but the trader had no heart, even though he saw he was dealing with a white boy, who had long led the life of an Indian, so he said he loved his gun and would not part with it.

Frank added more furs.

The trader shook his head.

Then Frank doubled his offer.

The trader still shook his head, and Frank turned away to go and bring more, even the last he had, when the man, believing that he would give no more, and not willing to lose so rich a bait, called him back and accepted the price.

Frank was delighted and seized the gun with rapture.

Then came up the question of ammunition, and for a good supply Frank was forced to give a fabulous sum in robes and furs.

But he was content, and would have given all he possessed, horses, tepee and clothes, for the treasure.

Happy in his purchase, and weighted down with ammunition, he walked off, little dreaming that the first purchase he had ever made in his life was to win for him a name known the world over, and that it had cost him in goods what would have brought him over a thousand dollars from any honest trader.

But the rifle was a cheap purchase to Frank, for with it he has made his fortune, won decorations from foreign courts, and from his marvelous skill in its use has been the guest of kings.

CHAPTER XV.

PUNISHING A ROBBER.

AFTER their rich haul among their innocent victims, the Indians, the traders were preparing to return to the settlement as soon as they could, when Frank passed by with his highly-prized rifle, and the one who had robbed him caught sight of him.

Now the man had an affection for the weapon, and really had not wished to part with it, for it was the best rifle in the party by far, and they did not doubt but that they might need it

upon their return, with their horses packed down, as they would be, with valuable furs.

So he called out to Frank:

"Say, half-breed pard, do you want to sell me my rifle?"

"No," said Frank, angry at being called a half-breed.

"I'll tell you what I'll do."

"What?"

"Can you shoot a gun?"

"I can."

"Have you shot that rifle?"

"Yes."

"How many times?"

"Six shots."

"Well, I'll bet you something you can't hit this at thirty steps," and he held up a silver dollar.

"What will you bet?"

"Have you got any more furs?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"A few."

"Any more robes?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"A dozen."

"Bear-skins?"

"No, I never killed a bear."

"Aha, I should say not, nor much else I guess, and I better get away before some Injun claims the furs you sold me, for you half-breeds are terrible thieves."

"Sir, I am no half-breed, but a white boy, who was captured by the Indians years ago and have lived with them ever since."

"Don't be hard on the boy, Ed," said another trader.

"Well, don't be spunky about it, boy, but let us drive a trade or a bet."

"Have you got a revolver?"

"No."

"Ever see one?"

"Yes, our chief has one."

"You see this one?" and he held up a beautiful weapon which he had drawn from his belt.

"Yes, it's pretty," and Frank looked at it with covetous eyes.

"Here's its brother," and he drew the mate to it.

"Oh, but it's pretty," said Frank.

"Indeed it is, and this goes with them," and he took from its scabbard a long bowie-knife.

Frank was delighted.

"Now I'll bet you this belt of arms just as it is that you cannot hit this dollar at thirty steps."

"I'll try," and Frank was getting his rifle ready when the trader called out:

"Hold on!"

"Well?"

"I bet these weapons and belt against your dozen robes and what furs you have."

Frank hesitated, and the man urged:

"Don't let me back you out, or you'll never be a shot."

"Well, I'll do it."

"Get your pelts then."

Frank went off for his robes and furs, and the Indians and traders all began to crowd around with deep interest.

Soon he returned, accompanied by several of his boy pards, and the robes and all were thrown in a pile.

Upon the top of them the trader tossed his belt of arms, and then stuck the dollar upon a tree, marking off the thirty steps.

Frank raised the rifle to his shoulder, took aim, and then asked:

"Do you give me three shots?"

"No, sir, only one."

"Give me two."

"No, sir, but one."

Frank sighed, and again took aim.

Then, amid a deathlike silence he pulled the trigger.

A dissatisfied grunt came from the Indians while the traders shouted with joy, for Frank had made a bad miss.

"You'll never be a shot, my boy, that is certain, and I'll take the little pile of robes and such," said the trader.

"I think I could hit it if I tried again."

"Have you got anything to bet, for I am a betting man?"

"I have two ponies."

"I wouldn't give my revolvers for half a dozen of 'em."

"I have my rifle," faintly said Frank.

"Ah! now you are talking and I'm in.

"What do you bet the rifle against?"

"Against the belt of arms."

"Done!"

Frank again prepared to shoot, and taking a long aim his bullet just clipped the edge of the dollar.

"The belt of arms is mine," he said quietly.

"It was not a square hit," remarked the man.

"It was a hit, for nothing was said about hitting it in dead center."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, boy."

"What?"

"I'll bet you all the pelts, skins and robes I got from you against the belt of arms and rifle, that you cannot hit the dollar plum' center, at fifty steps."

"I'll bet you," said Frank quietly, and the additional steps were paced off.

"Now put all the robes and furs together in a pile."

This was done, and the belt of arms was laid upon them, while Frank again took his stand and raised his rifle.

In a second's time he fired, and the dollar was hit plum' center!

"It are square, I admit, but it was an accident, and I make you another bet."

"What is it?" asked Frank.

"There are five twenties in gold, making one hundred dollars, and I'll wager you that against the weapons and skins that you cannot do it again, and there's another dollar to bore a hole in."

"The weapons and pelts are worth more than a hundred dollars," said Frank.

"Oh, they are, are they?"

"You are getting posted. Well, I'll make it two hundred, and there are ten twenties in my hand, and here's the other dollar to stick up."

"Won't the other one do?"

"The one you bored?"

"Yes."

"It has a hole in it."

"Ah, you don't intend to shoot into that hole?"

"Yes."

The trader turned slightly pale, but answered:

"Oh, you do, do you?"

"I do."

"It can't be done."

Frank simply asked:

"Do you bet?"

"Every time!"

Taking the dollar with a hole in it he called Minne and stood her against the tree.

Then he stuck the dollar into a notch in the tree, the edge being just on a level with the girl's head.

The Indians looked on with deep interest the while, and the trader called out:

"What are you going to do, sonny?"

"Win your money," was the quiet reply.

"You can't do it."

"I can try."

"You'll kill the girl."

"No," dissented Minne, shaking her head, and smiling.

Quickly stepping to the spot where he had before stood, Frank raised his rifle.

The Indians were as silent as death.

Minne was calm and smiling.

But the traders were talking loudly together to disturb his aim.

The moment his rifle was on a level, Frank touched the trigger and the crack followed.

"You missed the tree!" cried the trader.

"Dig in that hole under the dollar and get the bullet," answered Frank, coolly reloading the rifle.

The trader did so, and out came the bullet.

"It is one that you fired in the tree before!"

"Say, you stick the same dollar up, put a piece of paper behind it, and let one of your friends and the chief Red Wing take it down, and see if the bullet has not gone true," said Frank.

"Done; but the girl must stand as she did before."

"I will," assented Minne, with a smile.

Again Minne took her place, and the dollar was stuck up with a sheet of paper, torn from the trader's note book, behind it.

Once more the rifle cracked, and Red Wing and a trader took down the dollar, and found the paper pierced and the bullet in the tree.

"You have fooled me, boy, for you are the best shot I ever saw; and for deceiving me I will not give up the skins or the weapons."

"That is so, pard, he fooled you," cried a trader.

"You will give me all that I have won," and Frank covered the head of the trader with the rifle.

Instantly all was a scene of excitement, and the Indians grasped their weapons, while the traders stood with their hands upon their revolvers.

A hostile act would have precipitated a conflict and the traders knew it and one called out.

"There is peace between the pale-faces and

red-skins, so let us shake hands, my red brothers."

"There will be war if you don't stand back, all of you, and let me take what I have won," cried Frank.

The traders saw that the boy was in earnest, and he had their leader covered.

They were a dozen men among hundreds of Indians, and after a few words in a low tone together, the one who had so badly cheated Frank, and then attempted to rob him of what he had won, said:

"Call it the belt of arms and rifle, boy, and I'll say quits."

Frank made a remark in the Indian tongue to Red Wing, who turned to his people and said a few words.

Instantly the squaws and children began to fall back rapidly, and the warriors to crowd to the front.

The traders knew too well what this meant, and the leader said hastily:

"Well, half-breed, take your skins."

"And my money," firmly said Frank, still covering the trader.

"You don't claim that, too?"

"I do."

"There it is, then," and five twenty-dollar gold pieces were pitched at the feet of the boy.

"There are five more to come."

With a curse the trader threw them down also, and then Frank said sternly:

"You are robbers, pale-faces; you have black hearts, and you must go away from us now."

The traders were but too anxious, for they had realized immensely in their trades, excepting with Frank, and seeing the hostile attitude of the Indians, were most willing to get off with their thriving bargains, so they lost no time in departing.

CHAPTER XVI.

MINNE'S WARNING.

FROM the day he bought his rifle, Frank had a new field open up to him, for he found out his power as a shot.

Shooting either rifle or revolver seemed to come to him naturally, in fact was, as it were, an inspiration, and the Indians began to regard him as a superior being.

The peace that was patched up between the whites and the red-skins did not last long, and Red Wing was one of the first chiefs to start on a raid into the new settlements, for many settlers had moved to that part of the country during the lull in hostilities, and soon had come to regret their faith in red-skins.

In starting upon the raid Red Wing saw that Lone-White-Boy was not ready to go.

"Why does my son not go?" asked the chief.

"The Lone-White-Boy is a pale-face, and though he loves his red brothers, and lives among them, he will not fight his own people."

Red Wing was angry.

He had hoped to make the youth forget even that he was a pale-face.

But he found that he was mistaken, that with Frank Carver blood was thicker than water.

He knew better than to doubt the loyalty of

the youth to his red friends, for that had been proven too often; but then he did not like his hanging back when he was starting upon this raid.

He had hoped for much good advice and aid from Frank upon the expedition and was now grievously disappointed.

"The Lone-Boy is no pale-face now.

"His skin is red; he is as an Indian, and he is my son.

"He must go."

"The Lone-White-Boy will not go.

"He will remain in the camp," was the firm reply.

Red Wing knew the boy too well to urge him, or to threaten him; but he was determined that he would have a talk with him upon his return that would bring matters to a crisis.

So he rode off upon his raid against the pale-faces, and Frank remained behind.

He felt troubled that the Indians were going against his own people, and he wished that he could prevent it.

Then these thoughts came to him:

"Why should I live like a savage?

"I am no red-skin, for not a drop of Indian blood flows in my veins.

"I am white, and those very people I dwell among are those who killed my mother and sister.

"I can never forget that scene, and every Indian face I look upon should recall that fearful night.

"Why should I live here among these people?

"I have no home, and yet among the pale-faces I could find a home and live a different life.

"I will go and have a talk with Minne, for she loves the whites."

He went in search of Minne at once.

But she was not at her tepee, and her mother said that she was off on a hunt.

Then Frank rode off to try and find her, his heart sad.

It must be remembered that the poor boy was very young when he was made a captive, and the life he afterward led was enough to obliterate the past wholly from his mind.

But there was a germ of remembrance in his heart that would not die, and the captives he had met while in the Indian camp had nurtured that germ to bring forth good fruit as he grew older.

Had he known where to find one of his own kindred he would have gone willingly from the Indian camp.

But he knew nothing of his relatives, and felt his loneliness so deeply that he was compelled to look upon the red-skin village as his home and its people as his friends.

The raid of Red Wing had opened his eyes at last to the savage nature of those whom he dwelt among, and to how bitter was their hatred of his people, and it set him to thinking.

Taking the trail which he thought would most likely bring him to where he would find Minne, Frank rode thoughtfully along.

Suddenly looking up, as though feeling that he was not alone, he beheld Minne coming toward him.

Her pony was at a slow canter, and he looked as though he was about used up.

Minne also looked jaded, and yet she smiled pleasantly as she came near.

"Where is your game, Minne?" called out the youth.

"Minne has not been after game," was the low reply.

"Your mother told me that you had gone hunting."

"Minne does not hunt alone."

"And I came to look you up."

"Lone-Boy is good to think of Minne."

"Minne, what is the matter, for something has gone wrong with you?"

The girl made no reply, and Frank said:

"Come, Minne, tell me what it is."

"Has the Red Wing gone on the war-path?"

"He has."

"To raid the pale-face settlement?"

"Yes."

"The Lone-Boy is not with him?"

"No. I would not go against my own people."

"Minne is glad to hear this, and she rode hard to get back to the village that she might tell the Lone-Boy not to go."

"Why does Minne not want me to go?"

"She loves the pale-faces, for the Lone-Boy is a pale-face and he has taught her to."

"Then the captives of the Red Wing Minne loved, too."

"She did not wish the Red Wing to go upon the war-path, and she went to the medicine-man and told him that she had a dream that defeat would come upon her people if they went to kill the pale-faces."

"But he laughed at Minne, and the Red Wing and his warriors have gone."

"But the Lone-Boy is here, and Minne's heart is glad, for she has a secret for his ears."

"A secret to tell me, Minne?"

"Yes; but the Lone Boy must not tell on poor Minne, or the warriors will torture her to death."

"Why, Minne, what have you done?" asked Frank in surprise.

"Minne rode like the wind to the homes of the pale-faces, and she told them that the red people were coming to kill them and to burn and rob their houses."

Frank turned pale, and he muttered in hoarse tones:

"This girl has done what I should have done."

Then he said aloud:

"Minne, you must indeed keep this secret, for if you are found out you will die a death of fearful torture."

"Minne does not want to die; but her heart says she has done right, for, if the Red Wing finds that the pale-faces are ready to fight him he will come back, and then Minne will be happy."

Frank was deeply touched by the girl's act, and it caused him to become suddenly, as it were, a changed being, and the fact dawned upon him that the life of an Indian was not what he was intended for.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LONE-BOY IN TROUBLE.

THE thoughts that crowded themselves upon Frank after Minne's confession of what she had done, and the knowledge that Red Wing and his warriors had gone to attack the settlements, made him too anxious to remain idle in camp, so he mounted his pony, took his weapons, and rode off on a hunt.

Music Mouth saw him starting and called to him.

"What does the squaw of Red Wing want with the Lone-Boy?" asked Frank in no pleasant tone.

"Is the Lone-Boy going on the chase?"

"He may and he may not."

"The Music Mouth tells him to go, for she wants game in her tepee."

"Send the Wolf Catcher to get it, then."

"The Lone-Boy must go."

"The Lone-Boy will do as he likes," and Frank moved on.

Music Mouth was astounded.

Never before had she been spoken to in such a way by the pale-face youth.

The old Indian lady was as sly as a 'possum.

She saw her opportunity and determined to take advantage of it.

If she yelled at Lone-Boy and started after him in haste, at the same time using some choice Indian in her abuse of him, he would simply gallop on out of her way.

Her plan was a better one, she thought.

She would simply gather a stick, a cross between a tepee-pole and a sapling, and sneaking after him, give him one blow that would fetch him to the ground.

The pole was there, and she seized it.

Then she hastened on, as noiseless as a panther, in pursuit of the you'h.

He had reached the middle of the village, and many eyes saw his danger; but they were acquainted with Music Mouth, and so held their peace and waited.

Closer and closer she drew, and, running up behind the pony, raised her pole and was bringing it down with terrible force upon Frank's back, when up went the heels of his pony, and catching Mrs. Red Wing in the short ribs, knocked every atom of breath out of her body and sent her flying backward as though she had been shot from a cannon.

Frank did not even look around, but the expression on his face showed that he had made the pony strike out just at the proper time.

Continuing on his way as if unconscious of the affair, and pretending not to see a score of old hags running to the aid of the chief's squaw, he rode out upon the prairie and disappeared.

For several days he roamed about, amusing himself by shooting with rifle, revolvers and bow and arrow, and then he started upon his return to the village.

These days of solitude had done him good, and he had decided upon his course, which was to no longer remain in the Indian camp.

As Minne seemed to also wish to dwell among the whites, he would tell her of his intention, and get a home for her with some kind family who would not treat her badly.

If he found that his own people did not treat

him well, that he was as a stranger among them and not happy, then he would return to the tribe with whom he had so long dwelt, and there live and die.

Back then to the camp he went, and it took but a casual glance, as he neared it, to see that something had gone wrong.

There was weeping and wailing among the squaws, and the braves had their faces painted black.

"They've got hard blows over at the settlement, thanks to Minne," muttered Frank, as he rode into the village.

At sight of him a silence fell upon all, and then a score of braves came toward him.

Riding up to his tepee he dismounted, when Red Wing came toward him, his face very serious.

"Music Mouth must be dead," muttered Frank.

"If so I owe you a favor, Spot," he added, addressing his spotted pony.

"It's a good thing you didn't hit her on the jaw, or you'd have split your hoof," he went on, as Red Wing, accompanied by a score of warriors drew near.

"The Lone-White-Boy should droop his proud head," sternly said the Red Wing.

"Is the squaw of the chief, Music Mouth, dead?" asked Frank.

If Red Wing had been able to swear in English, he would have done so, for he said in quick, peevish tones:

"The Music Mouth is not dead."

"No wonder he looks sad then," muttered Frank.

But the next words of the chief caused him to turn pale with anger, for they were:

"The Lone-White-Boy is a traitor dog."

"He is not fit to live in the village of my people."

"Why does the Red Wing speak with a crooked tongue?" was the angry retort of the youth.

"The Red Wing speaks straight, and he tells the pale-face dog that he is a snake in the grass to go and tell the pale-faces that my warriors were coming upon them."

"The Red Wing has a black tongue to say this, for the Lone White Boy did not warn the pale-faces, nor has he been near their homes."

"The Lone-White-Boy has been away?"

"Yes."

"He went as soon as the Red Wing and his braves started upon the war-path?"

"Yes, a few hours after."

"The Lone-Boy took the trail of my braves?"

"No, the Lone-Boy went toward the setting sun."

"The Music Mouth saw him follow the trail of the Red Wing."

"The Music Mouth speaks with a crooked tongue."

"Let the pale-face dog say no more, for he is a snake."

"Let my braves seize him, for he shall die."

Frank started, and then, for an instant, seemed as though he was about to draw his revolvers and open upon the warriors advancing upon him.

But, as though thinking better of it, he folded his arms and quietly surrendered.

He was at once seized, bound with thongs and carried to the guard-lodge, and a warrior with his face all blackened was placed over him, and he knew that this was a sure sign that the prisoner was to die.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MINNE TO THE RESCUE.

IT was not strange that old Red Wing was mad with Frank, whom he believed to have hastened on ahead of himself and warriors and warned the whites of their coming.

He had been caught in an ambush and had lost a score of warriors killed, while three times as many more had been wounded, the chief himself having several teeth knocked out by a spent bullet, which did not improve his appearance or his temper.

Barely escaping with their lives the rest of the band hurried back to their village, hotly pursued, and returned in a very doleful humor, where they had expected to come back heavily laden with plunder, driving hundreds of horses and cattle, and with scalps enough to gladden their thoughts.

It was a terrible blow to them, and when the chief saw Music Mouth she breathed in his ear that it was none other than the pale-face in their camp to whom he owed his misfortunes.

Music Mouth also had a story to tell of her own misfortune, how she had been hoisted, as though with a derrick, and was sorely bruised; but Red Wing did not care for her ailments, in fact he would have been glad had the spotted pony kicked her into the happy hunting-grounds.

But he brooded deeply over Frank's treachery and held a council with his warriors about it.

Of course all believed that he had run off and that they would never see him more, so they were delighted to see him ride into the village: delighted, because it would give them a chance to get even on him, as they believed.

Having placed Frank in the Death Lodge, Red Wing called his braves together to concoct some kind of cruelty that had not been indulged in before in the Indian camp in the way of torture.

Every brave put on his thinking-cap, and tried to discover some new method of torture, other than roasting a victim, slashing them with knives and keeping them alive as long as possible to suffer.

What they had decided upon no one knows, for it was not made public; but they came to some conclusion as to their treatment of a traitor, and then went to their tepees to sleep upon the matter, so as to be ready the next day.

While they were sleeping Minne was wide awake and plotting.

She had seen Frank falsely accused, and knew that he must die unless she could save him.

But save him she would if in her power.

Still it was a most difficult task, for he lay bound in the Death Lodge, and a guard stood by the door.

But she did not despair, and first went to the corral and got his two best horses.

One of these she saddled and bridled for him, and the other she used as a pack-horse for his provisions, ammunition and robes.

Then she called on Music Mouth, whom she knew was out gossiping with other old crones, and stole Frank's belt of arms and rifle out of the tepee.

These arrangements for flight being accomplished, the next thing was to rescue the prisoner.

With this purpose in view she walked quietly toward the Death Lodge.

She had no right to be there she well knew; but then Minne was allowed to do pretty much as she pleased, and she boldly walked up to the guard.

It was unfortunately Wolf Catcher, the son of Red Wing, and the pet of his mother, Music Mouth.

Wolf Catcher was twenty years of age, and Minne was but fifteen, but she had won the hearts of all the young braves in the village, and had refused them too.

Wolf Catcher was among her rejected suitors, and, jealous of Frank, he had never forgiven Minne for the slight.

He knew that she loved his rival, and he divined why she had come, and said rudely:

"The Curly-Hair is a squaw, and she must keep away from the Death Lodge."

"Minne has come to speak with the Wolf Catcher," was the low reply.

"The Wolf Catcher has no ears for the voice of the Curly-Hair," was the response of the jealous young brave.

Minne saw that honeyed words would do no good, and she was determined to act promptly, for nothing should stand between her and her rescue of Frank, she made up her mind.

As though she intended passing on to her tepee, she started to walk by the young brave; and then, with the sudden spring of a panther she was upon him, her slender hands clutching his throat with a grip that prevented any outcry.

Taken wholly by surprise Wolf Catcher was thrown on his back by the weight of the Indian girl, and could not shake her off.

He could utter no cry, and in vain did he dash his clinched fist into her face to make her let go.

She clung on with a hold that could not be loosened by the young savage, strong as he really was.

His eyes seemed to start from their sockets, he gasped for breath, and he felt that life was slipping from him and made another effort to beat off the girl.

But it was no use; she still clung there with the tenacity of death.

But just then, unfortunately for Minne, two young warriors passed near, and in the darkness their keen eyes discovered the struggle.

They knew that something was wrong, and springing to the spot they seized the girl in their grasp, just as she felt that she had triumphed.

She uttered a cry of rage and disappointment commingled, and despairing of success sunk into a swoon.

She was carried to her tepee and a guard placed over her, while Wolf Catcher was considered a fit subject for the medicine-man to work on.

With the morning the two horses of the Lone-Boy were found, and Minne's plot became known, while Wolf Catcher told of the panther-like way in which she had sprung upon him, and how she would have killed him to rescue the prisoner.

This made it bad for Minne; but she might have been pardoned but for one circumstance.

That was that she was determined that Frank should not die.

The warriors of the tribe were equally as determined that he should, and he was led out to undergo the torture that would kill him by slow death.

Proudly erect he walked, defiant in manner, and though pale he was utterly fearless.

What his mode of death was to be he was ignorant of; but, whatever was before him he had nerved himself to meet unflinchingly.

But torture was not for him, for, just as he was led to the spot where the cruelties toward him were to be carried out, Minne forced herself through the crowd and cried in a voice that reached the ears of all:

"Sioux braves, you are cowards and fools! your eyes are blind, and your tongues are crooked.

"See! Minne is the one you should torture, for she it was who rode to the tepees of the pale-faces and told them that the Red Wing and his braves were coming to kill, to scalp, to burn their homes and rob them."

Had the Sioux been visited by a band from the happy hunting-grounds, all robed in snowy buckskin shrouds, they could not have been more astounded.

A silence like unto death fell upon all, even the babies stopping their howling, as though impressed by the stillness around them.

Frank's face looked very sad, and turning toward the girl, he shook his head and said in English:

"Ah, Minne, you had better kept quiet, for as a man I am more fitting to die the death they intend to inflict upon me, than are you."

"No, Minne has spoken, and Minne will die," was the firm response.

"Does the Little-Curly-Hair speak with a straight tongue?" asked Red Wing, as soon as he could find words to speak.

"Minne's tongue is not crooked."

"And one of my own people has been a traitor, where a pale-face was not?"

"Yes, the Lone-White-Boy is no traitor, he is no snake in the grass."

"He has done no wrong, and you are fools to want to kill him."

"See! the Curly-Hair went to the tepees of the pale-faces; she loves the pale-faces, and her heart would not see them die."

"They gave her yellow gold, and beads and rings, and they are here that the Red Wing and his braves may see that she speaks straight."

With this she threw down upon the ground at the feet of the chief a buckskin bag full of trinkets, consisting of some gold-pieces, beads, rings, necklaces and ribbons.

This was proof positive that the Curly-Hair was telling the truth, and was not shielding her lover by sacrificing herself.

Music Mouth looked disgusted at this, and

Red Wing had a sheepish air, not seemingly daring to look Frank in the face.

His warriors also hung their heads; but Minne again spoke up:

"Let the Red Wing set the Lone-White-Boy free, and lead Minne to the torture."

"He will hear her sing her death-song as a warrior might do, for she is not afraid to die."

"Let my braves release the Lone-White-Boy, and put the thongs upon the Curly-Hair, for she must die," was the next order of the old chief, and it was quickly obeyed.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ESCAPE.

At the confession of Minne, Red Wing was very angry, and would then and there have killed the Indian girl, but for a longing desire to torture her.

To see her die by an arrow, or a blow from a tomahawk, was too commonplace.

He must see her cringe with fear of her fate, they must hear her shriek with agony, and enjoy the tortures they would inflict upon her.

Indians never act hastily, except when getting out of the way of an enemy, and hence Red Wing postponed for the morrow, what he could have done to-day.

That is, he decided to let Minne live a day and night longer.

Not upon the Christian idea of giving time for repentance; but that he wished to make a grand example of her death.

When one of the tribe, beloved and respected as was Minne, should turn traitor, what might he not expect from one less favored?

So he argued, and more, he was determined that if any one else was inclined toward treachery, the fate of the young girl should scare them off from the execution of such a thing.

When Frank saw that Minne was to be spared until the following day he took advantage of his freedom, so unexpected to him, and mounting his pony rode out of the village.

In going by the corral and observing that there was too much interest in what was going on up at the village, for a guard to be kept there, he quietly lassoed two of his own ponies and led them hastily away, so that he should not be seen.

Taking a trail leading toward the south-east he kept on at a rapid pace for some thirty miles, and there came to a halt in a favorite spot, where he had often rested when out hunting.

He knew the spot well and soon had his two led horses staked out upon the bank of a little rivulet that glided through a ravine, where the grass grew in plentiful abundance.

With but a short rest he retraced his way, leaving the two led horses behind him.

Killing some game as he went along he rode into camp with his pony pretty well loaded down, and, as though he felt no hard feelings either toward Red Wing or Music Mouth, he deposited the result of his hunt at their tepee.

Music Mouth even smiled upon him for this, as she had just a short while before received a beating from the chief for having spoken with

a crooked tongue against the youth, and the smile was in anticipation of future revenge which she would visit upon him.

Then Frank went to his tepee and remained for a long time inside of his lonely quarters.

Afterward he strolled through the village, and was greeted with smiles by braves and squaws alike, who finding him innocent of the charges against him, were very anxious to curry favor with him once more.

But Frank received their advances coldly, and, after a tour through the village returned to Red Wing's lodge to take supper.

He was served with the best; but the meal did not pass off with any hilarity, for Wolf Catcher was there, his throat bearing the marks of Minne's nails and fingers, and Red Wing suffered with his teeth which had been broken off, and even dog-stew did not tempt him.

Then Music Mouth was still suffering from the kick she had, and Frank was gloomy about Minne's fate.

The conversation turning upon the poor girl, Frank asked Red Wing if she would surely be tortured to death on the morrow.

The old chief told him that nothing could save her.

After supper Frank went to his tepee for awhile, and then strolled about the village, after which he stepped into the medicine-man's lodge for a chat.

That worthy was a dried up specimen of manhood, who seemed a great sufferer, and was unable to cure his own aches.

His face was bound up half the time with buckskin rags, and he limped in both legs from rheumatism and was forced to carry a heavy cane besides his staff of office, which was a red stick with scalps fringing the top and little bags of "good medicine" tied to it.

It was the old chief's bedtime, and when disturbed he was as cross as two cats; but he had always liked Frank, and was glad to see him.

After some talk together Frank suddenly seized the old medicine-man by the throat, and, with an exertion of his strength, soon had him bound and gagged so that outcry was impossible.

Then he left the old red doctor to meditate upon good and bad medicine until he should be rescued from his unpleasant predicament.

Taking the staff, stick, blanket and head-dress of the old chief, and wrapping his jaws up as though suffering with the toothache, Frank hobbled out of the lodge, which all Indians held so sacred.

Not far from it was the Death Tepee where Minnie was confined, and before it stood an Indian guard.

The village was now quiet, excepting the noise made by the dogs, and Frank, in his disguise, moved toward the Death Dodge.

Seeing who he was, or rather whom he supposed him to be, the guard spoke pleasantly to him, and was responded to by a rap over the head with the cane, that dropped him as though he had been shot through the heart.

Setting the warrior up against a post and tying him securely, and gagging him, Frank boldly entered the Death Lodge and said, softly:

"Minne!"

"She is here," was the reply.

He stepped forward in the darkness and quickly severed her bonds, while he said:

"Lone-Boy has come to save Minnie."

"Minne will go," was the response.

"Let Minne put on this rig of the medicine-man."

She shrank back from the disguise, for to her the clothing and staff of the medicine-man were sacred.

But Frank urged and she obeyed.

"Now let Minne walk through the village toward the Medicine Lodge of Flying Fox.

"From there let her go to the lone tree on the prairie, and she will find the Lone White-Boy there."

"Minne will come."

Then they parted, the girl taking her part well of the old medicine man, and hobbling along as though in pain, while Frank boldly walked back toward his lodge.

Arriving there, he took up his saddle, bridle, and weapons, and a large pack, and strode away toward the timber.

There was the corral where the horses were kept, and the two best animals, which he knew well, were selected, saddled and led out.

Then he mounted one, and leading the other, made a circuit upon the prairie, stopping at a spot where a single tree was standing.

In the distance, half a mile away, he saw the glimmer of the camp-fires in the village, and soon he observed a form approaching at a slow gait.

Instantly he gave a signal well known to Minne, and it was answered, while just then wild yells resounded through the village.

"Come, Minne, for our escape is known," cried Frank, and he rode toward the Indian girl.

"They will kill the pale-face if they catch him, so let him go and leave Minne," she said.

"I'll carry you with me if I have to tie and gag you as I did the old medicine fraud," answered Frank, while the yells of the Indians grew louder, and the clatter of hoofs was heard coming toward them.

It was very evident that the guard had recovered consciousness, removed his gag and called for help.

Telling of the disguise of the medicine-man the secret was out, and there were several who had met the old chief, as they supposed, and the trail was quickly followed.

"Will Minne go?" asked Frank, calmly.

"Yes."

With the word she sprung upon the back of her pony, and away the two animals dashed at full speed.

And not an instant too soon, for hot in pursuit came half a hundred warriors.

CHAPTER XX.

THREE DEATH-SHOTS.

THROUGH the darkness fled the fugitives, well mounted, and silent as they rode along, and behind them, plainly visible by the light of the stars, came their pursuers hard in chase.

Thus several hours passed, the pursuers held at just such a distance by Frank, who was

aware that he had the best horses and could keep them ahead.

As day began to dawn and some broken country appeared ahead, the horses were urged on faster, and, to the chagrin of the pursuing red skins, they began to be left behind.

But Frank was aware that the animals they rode, though good ones, could not stand that killing pace long, and Minne told him so.

"I know that, Minne; but they have got to stand it until we reach yonder hill, and beyond it, in the valley, I have two more."

"Ponies?"

"Yes."

Minne's eyes asked the question of where they came from, and Frank told her how he had brought them there early in the morning.

"They will be fresh, and we will have time to change our saddles and mount them, and then the braves will be left far behind," explained Frank.

Minne smiled and looked hopeful, and both urged the panting horses on still faster.

At last the valley was reached, and, to his horror, Frank saw but one of the horses was where he had left the two.

That one was a white horse, captured some time before in a raid, and was a splendid animal.

The other had in some way managed to pull his stake up, and had wandered off.

"The one horse must do when the one you ride gives out, Minne," said Frank cheerily, as they dashed up to where the white horse stood.

To change his saddle and bridle from the tired horse he had ridden so hard to the white was but the work of a couple of minutes, and then again they dashed off in haste, for the Indian pursuers had drawn up almost in range, or some score of them had, while, stretched in a long line over the course they had come, were half a hundred braves, who were pressing on according to the respective speed of their horses.

The horse ridden by Frank ran with the greatest ease, and being fresh, had to lay back for the animal on which Minne was mounted, and which soon began to show unmistakable signs of distress.

"The other was the best pony, Minne, and I wish I had put you on him," said Frank, and looking back, he continued:

"Yes, Wolf Catcher knows that, and he has mounted him and given up his own horse."

"And, Minne, Gray Eye, the chief, has caught the horse that pulled up the stake, and now we will have it hot."

Frank's words were true, for the young chief, Gray Eye, and the brave, Wolf Catcher, now came on at a speed that began to overhaul the fugitives.

"Let them come within range, Minne, and Music Mouth will wail for her son," said Frank, unslinging his rifle ready for use.

In a short time they were in range, and discovering it, the two leaders began to fire at the fugitives.

"Now, Minne, watch Wolf Catcher," cried Frank, and he threw his rifle to his shoulder, and with its crack Wolf Catcher threw up his arms and fell from his saddle.

But at the same time Frank heard a low moan, and saw Minne reel in her saddle.

An arrow fired by Gray Eye had struck her in the back, and penetrated deep.

Instantly Frank jerked the arrow from the wound, and leaning over caught the poor girl in his arms just as she was falling.

"Minne must die!" she said, softly.

The words cut Frank Carver to the heart, and raised the tiger in his nature to avenge her.

"Minne, I will avenge you— Oh! she is dead, and Chief Gray Eye you follow her to the happy hunting-grounds," cried Frank Carver, hoarsely, and with the last word his finger touched the trigger.

The chief saw his danger, and drew up; but he was too late, for a bullet pierced his brain.

But other warriors were pressing on behind him, and Frank wheeled in flight once more, while he muttered:

"You are dead, poor Minne; but I'll not leave you for them to mutilate."

"No, no; I will carry your body with me, and bury it when those red fiends have given up the chase and gone back."

CHAPTER XXI.

FRANK STRIKES OUT FOR HIMSELF.

HOLDING before him the form of poor Minne, who in flying from death had met death, Frank Carver held on his way, the Indians giving up the chase, not only on account of the tiring out of their horses, but because they feared the deadly aim of the daring youth.

If they got near enough to send a few arrows after him, they knew that his unerring rifle would quickly pick off several of their number, and already had they to mourn the death of Gray Eye and Wolf Catcher.

Coming to a halt, therefore, they gazed after the retreating horseman until he was out of sight.

Calmly he rode on, sorrowing for the one being who had treated him with real kindness during his long years of captivity among the red-skins.

He had been praised by the warriors for his deeds, many of the squaws had been kind toward him in their way, and the children, with a few exceptions, all liked him, for he had been the arbiter of their difficulties, and had never allowed the strong to tyrannize over the weak, for he had the courage to back up his opinions, and more still, the strength to maintain them.

But Minne!

She had been the sunshine in the camp to him, the one who had shared his sorrows and his triumphs.

He had loved her; but not as she had regarded him.

Had he remained among the Indians, it might have been that some day she would have become his bride, for, as I have said, Little-Curly-Hair was strangely pretty for a red-skin, and had pleasant little ways about her that are not to be found in savage camps.

But alas for her, Minne fell from the arrow of one who loved her.

It was perhaps better so, for hers was a nature that would have been wretched without the one object of her love.

It was better too that she died as she did, rather than by the most cruel torture of her people.

Halting in a pretty grove of timber, near a crystal spring, Frank buried the dead girl, and then, with a sad heart continued on his way.

He felt also glad, for at last he had cast off the yoke that was upon him.

Though an Indian's life was as free as a bird, his life had not been wholly so, for, though trusting him they watched him, and though admiring him they feared him.

Now that he was free he would strike out for himself in the world.

At least he would not be living among those who made war upon the white race.

After several adventures of a stirring nature, Frank Carver reached a settlement and was kindly received.

He told his story of his long captivity among the red-skins, and found ready sympathizers.

Many offers were made him to remain in the settlement, but having seen that much of the world he longed to see more.

Ignorant as were many of the people whom he met, he found that they could teach him things of which he had never dreamed, and his first lesson was to learn the value of money, and then he understood thoroughly the grab-game the trader had played upon him in the purchase of his rifle, and he was glad he had punished him as he had.

Drifting along, feeling rich with his two hundred in gold, and which had already begun to diminish, he at last reached a town upon a gala day.

It was the nation's holiday, the Fourth of July, and the citizens were enjoying a barbecue and shooting-match.

Frank had somewhat changed his Indian dress, but he was attired in buckskin, even to his moccasins, but had bought a broad sombrero.

He was burned nut brown, his hair was nearly down to his waist, and as beautiful as a woman's in its golden hue.

He put up at the tavern, and then strolled out to the barbecue to see the crowd.

The sports were about to commence, and led off with a race, every one paying a dollar to enter and the winner taking the pool.

Frank asked an old man a few questions to post himself, and then plunked down his dollar.

The men bounded away at the word, many gazing upon the handsome, splendidly-formed youth and wondering who he was.

They soon found out that he was the winner, for he ran in ahead of the swiftest runners with an ease that was remarkable.

This attracted the attention of all to him, and the champions of the village were determined to beat him in the next sport.

Leaping, distance and height, was called next, and again Frank calmly put up his money, and once more took the stakes.

People then began to look upon him as a marvel, as an athlete, and many asked who he was.

No one knew him, or had seen him before.

Learning that there was also to be a pool for horsemanship and shooting, Frank hastened back to the tavern and got his horse and rifle.

The test of horsemanship was to let the riders go into a large inclosure and exhibit their feats in riding, one at a time, and then all to end with a grand race.

Frank put up his dollar.

"Five dollars for this entry," said the manager.

Frank handed over his five dollars.

He was the last to exhibit his skill, and it is needless to say that those present had never seen such feats of horsemanship outside of a circus.

He rode standing up in his saddle, he hung on the side of his horse; he ran by his side, dismounting and remounting at full speed.

There was no question as to who would win, and when the grand race came, Frank's noble white went to the front ahead of the score of horses against him.

The men were anxious and curious, and the ladies were lost in admiration of the handsome stranger.

"Rifle Nick will beat him when it comes to shooting," said one.

"Yes, and Sandy will lay him out when it comes to the revolvers," added another.

"Don't know," calmly remarked a bystander who was watching Frank pretty closely.

"My money is on him to win at all he puts in for," said a man in border dress, whom Frank had defeated in each game.

At last the shooting was called, and Frank stepped to the front as before.

He did not know who he was to shoot against, and he did not care.

He was the last on the list, and had several bull's-eyes to beat.

Stepping up to the target, he put a little chip in the one nearest the dead center, and going to his stand, fired with a quickness that made all believe that his rifle had gone off before he had taken aim.

"You can have another shot, young fellow," said the borderman.

"I hit what I aimed at," answered Frank.

"Oh, you did," and a rush was made for the target, and the chip was seen to be driven through the hole made by the dead-center shot.

"A fifty you can't do that again," cried one.

"Fifty what?" asked Frank.

"Fifty dollars."

"Will better shooting do as well?"

"Better shooting? It can't be done."

Frank asked:

"Do you bet that I can not hit this thrown in the air," and he held out a quarter.

"I do; here's my fifty."

"Then throw up the quarter."

It was done and the bullet shivered it to pieces.

"You have Rifle Nick's money, young feller, and I give it gladly to see such shooting.

"I thought I was the boss, but you lays over all I ever see."

"Oh! I can beat that," said Frank.

And taking a quarter and a half-dollar from his pocket, he loosened his revolver in his belt.

Then he threw the two himself high in the air, and up went the rifle, and away flew the quarter in pieces.

Then letting go the rifle with one hand, he drew the revolver with his other and at its crack the half-dollar went ringing through the air, a piece cut out of one side.

A yell broke from the crowd at this, and a voice cried:

"That rules you out of the revolver match, young feller, for nobody could win ag'in' you."

Frank smiled and turned to the borderman who addressed him with:

"Say, young man, my name is Brewster, and I want you for a pard, and here's my grip."

Frank grasped the offered hand, and thus was formed a friendship which was never broken.

CHAPTER XXII.

FRANK TURNS STUDENT.

UNDER the guidance of his new friend, Frank Carver went through the Western country, shooting at various places, and thus making money enough to take care of himself for a few years while attending school, for he was anxious to learn something of books.

He was able to read and write a little when captured by the Indians, and from newspapers and books brought in by the red-skins on their raids he had kept from forgetting what he knew.

While with his new-found friend, Frank made a visit to his old home, but found that his father was dead, and with no tie to bind him to any one that he cared for, he drifted about the country until he settled in Winslow, Illinois, where he attended school.

Determined to learn, he made an apt scholar, and boarding in the house of a dentist, he took a fancy to learn to plug teeth, hoping to become as expert at it as he was in plugging targets.

For four years he studied hard at his books and his profession, and at the end of that time concluded that he was entitled to hang out his shingle as a "Tooth Carpenter," as he expressed it.

Through those four years, however, Frank did not neglect his rifle and pistols, but was shooting constantly when not studying or working.

If he went out for a walk, he would shoot grasshoppers on the jump with his revolvers, or any bird that flew by him, and the same when riding about with his rifle, he was constantly on the alert for a flying target.

In fact he spent as much money for ammunition as he did for board.

With a snug little office, in a pleasant village, a gilt sign announcing,

"DR. W. FRANK CARVER,
"Dentist,"

and patrons flocking in, my hero almost had the current of his life change into that of a country practitioner.

But the confinement to his office wore on his health, strong as he was, and he longed for the freedom of the prairies once more.

One day he was surprised by a visit from his old friend, Brewster, the hunter, who proposed a trip to the Far West.

In came the sign, the office and its good will

was sold out to a young dentist, and off to Council Bluff's the two prairie lovers started.

After a short stay there, Doctor Carver announced his intention of going out to the Republican river country, where he would hunt and trap for a living.

Of course Brewster went with him, and saddling their horses, and packing their traps and stores on mules, they started.

After a few days of travel over the prairies, Doctor Carver became his old self again, growing brighter and happier every day that carried him into the wilds of the West.

It seemed that:

"Nature joyed her faith to prove him;
All her dewy woodlands smiled:
How her wild birds sung above him!
As no other power could love him,
Sure she owned and loved her child."

He was a splendid comrade, and Brewster rejoiced at the good fortune that had brought them together, and was glad that Frank had given up his profession for the free life of the plains.

CHAPTER XXIII. BACK IN THE WILDS.

ONE night, while the two comrades were encamped upon the Platte, a rifle shot rung out, and Brewster was wounded in the leg.

Almost instantly a party of Indians darted toward the camp, and another shot killed a pack-mule.

But Frank was now at work with his rifle, and his deadly aim soon drove the Indians back with a loss of two of their number.

With the study of dentistry, Frank Carver had combined that of surgery and medicine in a slight degree, saying that it would serve him well some day.

And now it did, for Brewster's wound was not a slight one; but it was skillfully dressed by the doctor, whose experience among the Indians alone had made him well acquainted with wounds of all kinds.

This accident compelled a halt of some days; but a wagon-train passing near, an offer was kindly made to carry Brewster to Fort Kearney, and they joined the train.

It was only a few days, after their arrival at Fort Kearney, before Doctor Carver distinguished himself as a shot.

He joined a party going out after Indians, and upon the march killed a celebrated chief in a duel upon the prairie, and stampeded the band by his rapid and deadly shots into their midst.

Winter came before Brewster was able to leave the fort, and in that time Carver's wonderful skill with rifle and revolver had spread to all the posts near, and many a "dead shot" sought him out to show him that he could be beaten.

Frank accommodated all who came and carried off the honors with the greatest ease.

As soon as Brewster was able to travel, they set out for the Republican country, at the head of the river, and set to work building a "dug-out."

Here they trapped until early Spring, when another accident broke the even tenor of their lives.

Coming in one day from visiting his traps Brewster found the doctor down with a broken leg.

His horse had fallen upon it and broken it, and there was nothing to be done but for Brewster to go to the fort for help.

Bandaging it up as well as he could, Brewster started, as soon as he had done what Carver told him, which was:

"Pile up plenty of wood, load the weapons, put something to eat where I can get it, and I'm ready for a visit from Indians or wild beasts."

With sorrowful misgivings Brewster started, and in a blinding snow-storm, and at night found himself at the cabin again, for he had been riding in a circle all day.

Doctor Carver laughed at the discomfiture of his friend and told him to wait until the snow-storm was over.

Again Brewster started, and had nearly reached the fort, when he was captured by red-skins and taken to their camp. It was long before he could make his escape.

Hastening to the fort, when he did get away, he told his story, and soldiers were at once sent with him, though with little hope of finding Carver alive.

Arriving at the "dug-out," a skeleton form was lying at the door, cleanly picked by wolves.

"Poor fellow, he is dead," said Brewster.

"Here are two more dead ones," cried a soldier who had entered the open door of the cabin.

"They are Indians, doubtless, whom he killed before they did him," sadly responded Brewster.

Just then a man came toward them who was a stranger to all.

He was a man with long gray hair and beard, and he said to Brewster:

"Do you seek the one who was left here?"

"Yes."

"He is at my cave and nearly well."

"I heard firing, came here, and found him standing off a band of Indians."

"I took him to my home, and there you will find him."

"Who are you?" asked Brewster, rejoiced at this news.

"I am called the Hermit of the Republican."

Brewster had heard of a man who lived alone on the Republican, no one knew why, and he was glad to meet him and know that Frank was safe, so he went with him to his cave on the river bank, and the meeting of the two friends was a joyous one indeed.

During the summer Dr. Carver and Brewster visited various frontier posts, and everywhere Frank amazed all by his wonderful marksmanship.

From that time the doctor became a noted plainsman, and much service did he render to emigrants against the Indians, until he became famous as a red-skin killer.

After a trip to the East, Dr. Carver returned to the border, announcing his determination to make him a home upon the Medicine river.

His friends tried to dissuade him, telling him it was folly; but he was determined, and to the Medicine he went.

It was autumn, and the country was full of Indians. The familiar landscape met him like an old friend, and he felt happier than he had

been for months as he gayly set about building his house.

The first night that he went into solitary camp upon the Medicine he has reason long to remember. He had not seen any Indians, so he ventured to make a fire to boil his coffee and cook something to eat. When his supper was prepared he sat down to eat it by his crackling fire, and had poured out some coffee in his tin cup, that he was just raising to his lips, when an arrow came whizzing through the cup, shooting it out of his hand and nearly blinding him with hot coffee.

He made a forcible remark as he sprung suddenly to his feet, all appetite for supper gone with the cup, and kicked the fire in every direction, stamping out the embers. Then he lay flat down in the long grass and weeds, perfectly quiet, while the Indians hunted for him, gliding so near that their moccasins brushed him where he lay, till one of them stepped on him and took a sudden header into space. Then the doctor sprung to his feet and commenced shooting with his Henry rifle. The Indians had never seen anything like it. The constant, steady blaze bewildered and alarmed them. They thought that a gun that would shoot right along for two minutes would keep right along shooting forever, and the man who could keep it blazing away, and hit so often in the darkness, could be nothing but an evil spirit, or a bad medicine-man.

Next morning the Indians renewed the attack, determined to learn what sort of mysterious weapon it was that in the hands of one mysterious man could do the work of at least a dozen well-armed savages. They surrounded him upon a little knoll and one after another would approach him curiously, but always stop at a safe distance, quite unable to summon courage enough to advance. He kept up a constant fire, and they finally scattered and slunk away, convinced that he was an Evil Spirit, against whom they were powerless to contend. And indeed he seemed to bear a charmed life. Arrows and bullets passed him by as harmless as if turned aside by some supernatural power. The Indians continued to hang about and watch him with great curiosity, but they ceased to molest him for the time, and he went quietly about his house-building.

Brewster, who had remained at the fort, became restless and uneasy without his friend, longed for their old wild life together, and soon started out to join him in his home on the Medicine. He traveled by night to elude the Indians, who are very superstitious, and will not attack people at night unless it is clear moonlight or they are camped by a bright fire. He reached the doctor's camp without accident, and was warmly welcomed by his old partner, who was busily working away at his little house.

"I thought you'd give it up, Doc, when it came right down to a game of solitary."

"You ought to have known me better, my boy. When we are a little better acquainted, perhaps after we've lived together a few years longer, you will learn that when I've said a thing you might as well call it done, for done it's sure to be, sooner or later."

Together they had soon completed a snug log-cabin, on the very spot the doctor had selected the year before, and there they remained for many seasons, going out often on long hunting and trapping excursions, but always returning to their little castle on the Medicine. One of the guides from the fort, Dick by name, became greatly attached to the doctor, and would stay with them for months, sometimes remaining in charge of the camp while they went on their long expeditions.

In their trapping excursions where they expected to stay for any length of time, they would make a little cabin, with a narrow passage underground, through which they could creep, coming out by some neighboring rock or tree, to take observations of the movements of any hostile bands of savages that might attack them. Dr. Carver had been left alone in one of these cabins, while Brewster went back to camp for ammunition. Going out to look at the traps, he was surprised by a band of Indians, who pursued him to the very door, which he slipped through and fastened before they could force an entrance. They immediately commenced with hideous yells to pile up leaves and brush and dried branches around the little cabin, which they set on fire, and then, gathering around it so their victim could not possibly escape, they watched it burn to the ground. Scarcely had the last flame died away, when crack came the report of a rifle, followed by another and another in quick succession, and there, a few yards away stood the tall, fair man whom they had all seen go into the little cabin that was now a smoking ruin at their feet, and none had seen him come out. Yelling, "It is the Evil Spirit with his spirit gun," they scattered and fled, leaving their dead comrades where they had fallen. Brewster, coming back, found the doctor camping serenely in open air, and not an Indian in the neighborhood.

Dr. Carver had scattered a band of Indians whom he found trying to burn his home on the Medicine, one night he returned from a hunt, and, pursuing them to their camp, had picked up on the trail a crumpled note from a captive lady, entreating the finder to rescue her and her little girl, who had been captured by the Indians on their way to California. He disguised himself as an Indian, and, traveling day and night upon the trail, overtook the savage band, and spent months among them unsuspected, before he could succeed in effecting the escape of the captives, whom he brought back with him to his little home. The lady's husband had been killed when the wagon-train was attacked; her brother in California, to whom she sent letter after letter, never made the least response, and for several years they remained welcome inmates of the doctor's home. The mother finally married and removed to Kansas, taking her beautiful young daughter with her, and forbidding Dick, the guide whom she had promised to marry, ever to see her again. Two years later Dick followed them to Kansas, and reached the little town of Abilene just in time to prevent the young lady's marriage with another by shooting her dead at the altar. Her mother, whose brother is still in California, went wholly in-

sane, and for a long time wandered about the streets of the little town calling for her child. Dick escaped and became the leader of a gang of frontier cut-throats. Going one night to the doctor's home, disguised as an Indian, to steal his famous trick-horse, "Surprise," which he had always coveted, he was discovered at the door of the cave where the horse was kept, by the doctor and his friend Bradford, and shot for an Indian. When they discovered that it was an old guide and their faithful friend for years, they made him a grave on Sunset Hill, overlooking the little valley, and left him in that lone, romantic spot—the first white man ever buried on the Medicine.

"Surprise" was the delight of the doctor's heart. A magnificent great dapple gray horse with almost human intelligence; they were companions in too many mad adventures and exploits not to have the keenest sympathy and affection for each other. The noble animal seemed to understand his master's slightest wish before it could be expressed, and to fulfill it with more than human sagacity. The fleetest horse they ever encountered could not overtake him in a race, and the slowest they ever matched speed with was only beaten by a short distance, "Surprise" maintaining a moderate pace that kept his opponent within a certain distance to the end; and later, when the master varied the shooting of savage prey with the more peaceful pastime of smashing glass balls, the splendid animal would allow him to shoot the ball from his head, taking the fire full in his face without flinching. He was trained to many tricks, and was the truest friend and most amusing companion his master ever had.

CONCLUSION.

Of Doctor Carver's later career I need not speak, for the newspapers of the world have published him as the greatest shot ever known, and daily notices are seen of his wonderful exploits as a horseman, and with rifle, revolver and lasso, while as a plainsman he has won a name along with such heroes as Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill, Texas Jack and others; and years hence, after many generations have passed away, his name will go down in song and story as one of the marvelous men that sprung up in the land of the setting sun.

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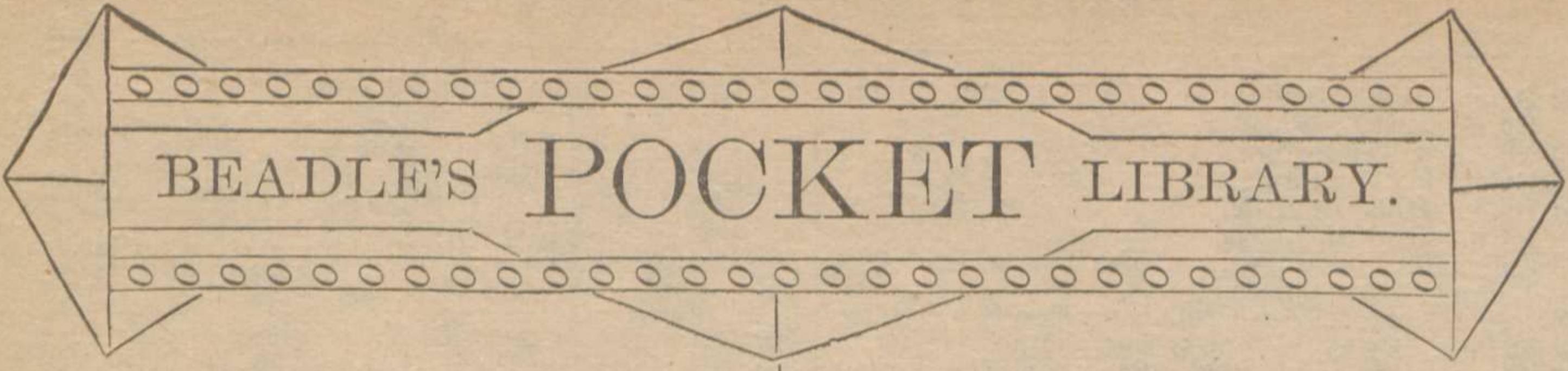
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